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# SAINT COLUMBAN

*By*

THE COUNT OF MONTALEMBERT

ENGLISH EDITION

With Introduction, Notes and Critical Studies
*By*
REV. E. J. McCARTHY, S. S. C.

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SAINT COLUMBAN

# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## I

IN the crypt of the old abbey church at Bobbio on the banks of the Trebbia, in Northern Italy, the bones of an Irish exile monk lie at rest, and each year on his feast day pilgrims gather at his tomb to kiss the silver bust that enshrines his relics. Afflicted ones come to invoke his aid and go away comforted; and the poor for whom bread is always scarce cut their loaves on the altar with the same old knife with which he cut his scanty fare, and touch the cup he drank from, that they may have his blessing on the sustenance of their lives.

In a nearby valley of the Apennines, mothers still climb to an ancient grotto and lay their sick babes on the spot that tradition tells them was hallowed by the prayers and sacrifices of the great saint whose spirit seems to hover there, even after thirteen hundred years.

By the slopes of the Vosges where eastern France lifts itself up from the valley of the Saône to meet the Jura and the Alps, this same personality is remembered and revered, and in the parish churches of the towns and villages that bear his name the little ones come with their mothers to kneel before his statue and kiss those feet that brought to their ancestors the "tidings of great joy."

Farther towards the east beyond the Vosges and the Jura, in the beautiful country around Lake Constance and the Rhine, at the foot of the Swiss Alps, the same name of Columban, Irish monk and missionary, is still honored as an apostle's; and the face of western Europe, from the slopes of the Apennines and the Alps to the

shores of the North Sea, is dotted with the ruins of monasteries that he and his spiritual children founded to keep alive the spirit he brought with him from his western island home.

The names of great personalities usually live only in the pages of history, or in the systems or movements they have founded. It is no ordinary personality that can live and be loved through centuries in the hearts and devotion of the peoples of three distinct nations. The French, Germans and Italians have been especially debtors to St. Columban and have vied with each other in preserving his memory. Like many another Irish missionary, he was forgotten in the land of his birth, overshadowed perhaps in the affections of the people by his great contemporary of the same name, the apostle of Scotland, who remained nearer home and whose family and its fortunes were more closely associated with the history of his country.

But far otherwise is it in the countries of Columban's apostolate. Each in turn has contributed to his memory and veneration not merely by its faith and devotion, but by scientific historical inquiry into his life and times, and by intimate study of his character, which has left such an indelible impress on the history of European civilization. Every phase of his varied labors and of the influence he exerted in his own and subsequent ages has been studied by eminent scholars, so that today he lives for us, not embodied merely in a system or a movement, but as a vital, lovable, human personality. His virtues and his faults, the foundations of his triumphs and his failures, are laid before us in a way in which the lives of very few other saints even of more modern times are presented to us. His life and character, too, have stood the test of Gallicanism and German criti-

cism, for the critics have succeeded only in bringing more clearly before the world the grandeur of his memory.

Before his elevation to the Chair of Peter, His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, in the course of his historical studies and research work in the Ambrosian Library of Milan, came into close contact with the influence of St. Columban, and has voiced his appreciation of it in the following terms:

"St. Columban is to be reckoned among those distinguished and exceptional men whom Divine Providence is wont to raise up in the most difficult periods of human history to restore causes almost lost. This illustrious son of Ireland worked within no narrow confines. As scholarship throws an increasing light on the obscurity of the Middle Ages, the more clearly is it manifest that the renaissance of all Christian science and culture in many parts of France, Germany and Italy is due to the labors and zeal of Columban—a demonstration to the glory of the whole Church and more particularly of Catholic Ireland."

If we except St. Malachy of Armagh, who a few centuries later had the singular privilege of having his biography written by another saint and personal friend, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, none of the outstanding figures of this early period have been so fortunate in their historians as St. Columban was. Jonas, a monk of Bobbio, committed the traditions of the saint to writing within twenty-five years after Columban's death.

Jonas entered Bobbio three years after the death of St. Columban and spent his first nine years there as secretary and companion to Athala, Columban's successor. He occupied a similar post with Bertulf, who became third abbot of the monastery in A.D. 627. He was at Luxeuil before the death of St. Eustace in A.D. 629 and

during the next ten years visited the new monastic foundations that were springing up everywhere across the face of Europe as a result of the zeal of the sons of Luxeuil, where the Coumban tradition had been best preserved. He met and talked with the men who had been associated with Columban and learned from them the facts of his life and sanctity, and when he published these traditions ten years later, many of the colleagues of Columban were still alive and as bishops and abbots held prominent positions in the religious life of the country.

From contemporary chronicles and other independent sources we gather that Jonas was an exceedingly careful historian, and internal evidence from his works proves him to have been a scholar of no ordinary ability. In a few cases only do his accounts fail to coincide with those of secular chroniclers who touch on the same events, and then only in details. This is all the more remarkable when we remember that he wrote at a time when there were few works of reference, and had to learn his facts from word of mouth. His admiration for his hero, and a fear that the saint's actions might sometimes be misunderstood, led him to pass over a few incidents in Columban's life, which we would prefer he had included and interpreted for us, rather than leave them to the surmises of less sympathetic critics in after years. But Jonas knew his public, and the circumstances of the age he wrote for, better than we do.

So important is this *Vita Columbani* of Jonas that no other hagiographical document of the Middle Ages has been the subject of more erudition and labor. The fact that it is found in at least one hundred and twenty-eight different manuscripts, scattered through the libraries of Europe, is sufficient proof of the high esteem with which

it was regarded by subsequent monastic schools and scholars.

The Life of St. Columban together with his Rule, letters, poems and homilies was first printed in 1667 in the *Collectanea Sacra* of Father Patrick Fleming. Father Fleming was an Irish Franciscan ordained at Louvain where he afterwards became professor of Philosophy and Theology. The collection of Columban's works was made chiefly from manuscripts at the monastery of Bobbio where he stayed during a journey to Rome between 1623 and 1626. Part of the work of copying was done by the librarian who, Father Fleming tells us, had a great veneration for St. Columban and who was the first to bring his works to Father Fleming's attention. At Rome he found some of the letters of the Saint and subsequently became familiar with other important manuscripts elsewhere. The *Collectanea* was finished before 1631, when Father Fleming was sent from Louvain as Superior of a new Franciscan house at Prague. The following year he was murdered there by a band of Lutheran peasants. The work was actually published thirty years later by Thomas Sheerin, and in the middle of the nineteenth century was incorporated by the Abbé Migne into his Patrology. The Rule, Penitential, homilies, letters and poems are to be found in Volume 80 of Migne's Patrology, and the *Vita Columbani,* the famous work of Jonas, is contained in Volume 87 of the same collection.

With the rise of German scholarship in the domain of historical research and criticism, the life and works of St. Columban became the subject of much literary and critical controversy, and three or four outstanding names of international fame are linked up with the best and most complete editions of his extant writings. The *Vita Columbani* of Jonas was edited in 1902 by Dr. Bruno

Krusch in the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica-Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum,* Vol. IV. It is a work of marvelous erudition and detail, in which no less than one hundred and twenty-eight manuscripts have been collated and variations of readings noted, so as to give us the text which is most likely to agree with the original as Jonas wrote it.

Between the years of 1893 and 1896 the Rule of St. Columban and the Penitential were edited by Dr. Otto Seebass in a German review of Ecclesiastical History, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte.* His letters and poems have received similar attention at the hands of Wilhelm Gundlach in Vol. III of the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica,* Hanover, 1892. The *Instructiones* or homilies found in the *Collectanea Sacra* and Migne and numerous old MSS. under the name of St. Columban have been rejected by Seebass. He admits only four of them as genuine and attributes the others to Faustus of Lérins. Some of these homilies are exceedingly beautiful and we would like to claim them for our saint, but the contentions of Seebass have not yet been seriously challenged by any advocate for their Columban authorship.

The authenticity, however, of all the other extant writtings attributed to St. Columban in the early manuscripts has been subjected to so much impartial criticism and controversy on the part of scholars and paleographists, and has been so generally accepted that there can no longer be any reasonable doubt that they are the genuine works of the saint. Consequently, we are in a position to form with accuracy a true picture of his life and times. Some of these documents are so intimate, e. g., his letter written from Nantes to his brothers at Luxeuil, that we can almost look into the depths of this great soul who stood at the cradle of our civilization and guided its infant steps.

## II.

Many distinguished writers in recent times have attempted to portray for us the life and influence of St. Columban in European history, but few of them have been in a better position to appreciate that influence fully than the illustrious Count of Montalembert. A Frenchman partly by blood, though not by birth, and wholly by sentiment and character, he lived in an age when his countrymen tried to make themselves and the world believe that the Church and its monasticism were retrograde institutions. Montalembert set out to show that these despised institutions in France were really the foundation of all our civilization and the chief link between us and the cultural treasures of the past.

Charles Forbes Réné, Count of Montalembert, was born in London in 1810. His father, driven from France by the political chaos of the time, was serving in England in a military capacity. After the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 he was selected by the English Regent to announce the restoration of the French monarchy to Louis XVIII. He was afterwards appointed plentipotentiary to Stüttgart and Stockholm under the restoration. His mother, a convert, was descended from a Scotch Protestant family.

Montalembert's boyhood years were spent in England, but later he went for his education to France, which afterwards became the country of his adoption, since it was that of his ancestors. As a student he escaped the spirit of irreligion then rapidly growing in the schools of France, and at this early age became imbued with that love of liberty and truth which characterized his whole life. "Would it not be a splendid thing," he wrote to a young friend in his college days, "to show that religion is the mother of liberty?"

This became the motto of his life and he devoted himself to its realization with all the genius and self-sacrificing zeal that his brilliant mind had to offer. In 1830, when he was scarcely twenty years of age, he traveled to Ireland to meet O'Connell and to offer his services in the cause of Catholic Emancipation, but O'Connell had already won. The Emancipation Act had been passed and Montalembert returned to France to devote himself to the cause of freedom of education and of the Church in his own country. At the time Lamennais, another ardent devotee of liberty, was embarking on the publication of *L'Avenir*, that short-lived but brilliant periodical which in the course of a few years was destined to secure for itself a rather unenviable place in the history of Catholic journalism. Montalembert became aware of this venture while in Ireland and offered his services to Lamennais. "All I know and all that I can do," he wrote, "I lay at your feet." Through Lamennais he became acquainted with Lacordaire, later on a Dominican and famous orator, and since that time their names have been inseparably associated in the history of the period.

For two years *L'Avenir*, sponsored and edited by this brilliant trio, made an impression on the minds of the leading men of church and state, favorable or unfavorable, according to their position and prejudices. At once the advocates of truth and liberty, the young and rather immature minds that guided its spirit forgot the conservatism of the Church, and more than once overstepped the limits of prudence in championing their cause. The policy of the paper, rather radical for that time, was finally disapproved of by the Pope and its publication discontinued. Montalembert and Lacordaire submitted immediately, but greatly to the sorrow of his friends Lamennais persisted in his own idea of the methods of achieving freedom. Montalembert did everything in his

power to persuade him to submit, until finally Lamennais left the Church and in 1836 Montalembert broke off all correspondence with him.

This incident, so disastrous for Lamennais, brings out into greater relief the humble soul of Montalembert, for it must have been a keen disappointment to him. Yet he never wavered from his devotion to the cause of religious liberty to which he had devoted his life. He was then only in his early twenties when youth is so much inclined to regard as reactionary the old conservative ways that are based on the experience of centuries.

Even at this early period he had already begun the historical researches which more than all his other work have given him a lasting title to the gratitude of posterity. At the age of twenty-six he published the Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, a work which had far-reaching effects in reviving hagiography in France. The lives of the saints and the supernatural generally had little or no place in the intellectual life of the country at the time. The brilliancy of Montalembert's work, the position he occupied as a peer of France, which he became following the death of his father in 1831, and as the leader of a new school of thought gave a fresh impetus to the study of the more spiritual and ascetical aspects of the history of the Church. Consequently, within the following twenty-five years that vast field of history, hitherto only partly explored, benefited by a great renaissance of scholarly interest. These twenty-five years Montalembert spent delving still deeper into the sources from which he later compiled his monumental work, *The Monks of the West.*

The realization which he got from those hidden and dusty annals of the part that the Church and its institutions had played in moulding Europeon civilization formed the background of his magnificent and fearless

fight for the recognition of liberty in religion and education. In the House of Peers he presented himself as a Catholic before everything else at a time when, as he himself writes, "to profess or defend the Catholic Faith meant decided unpopularity." Freedom of education in France, which he had advocated for twenty years, was granted, to some extent at least, in 1850.

During these years his activities were varied and unceasing. He used his influence to have the Benedictines and Dominicans of France restored to their proper status and ancient privileges. He wrote vehemently on behalf of the freedom of Poland and busied himself with the interests of Christians under the French protectorate in the East. When Pius IX began his pontificate in 1848, menaced by the increasingly aggressive attitude of Naples towards the Papal possessions and the liberty of the Holy See, Montalembert became a foremost protagonist of the Church and strove to get the support of the French Assembly against the aggression of the Neapolitan government. That same year the revolution in France which dethroned Louis Philippe respected the interests of the Church, and the Holy Father wrote to Montalembert: "We gladly believe that it is partly owing to your eloquence which has endeared your name to your generous countrymen that no harm has been done to religion or its ministers." Later on when Victor Hugo criticized France for sending an expedition to aid the Holy See, Montalembert declared that "the Church was the mother of Europe, the mother of modern society," a statement that brought applause from two-thirds of the Assembly.

In 1850 he went to Rome, where he was personally congratulated by Pius IX for his efforts in behalf of liberty and justice in so many good causes, and ten years later, when in his letters to Cavour he took up the

defense of the Holy See against the opponents of the temporal power, Pius enthusiastically exclaimed, "Our dear Montalembert has surpassed himself." Only a few months before, on April 21st, 1860, he had dedicated to the Holy Father the first volumes of *The Monks of the West*. He did not live to complete the work.

Montalembert ended his brilliant career on the 13th of March, 1870, a few days after the publication of a letter that has been very much misunderstood and which endangered after his death the good name and stainless orthodoxy that he bore so proudly through life. It was a letter outlining his views on liberty and authority from the Catholic standpoint written to a lawyer named Lallemand. Some unfortunate phrases that he used made a bad impression on conservative minds. Even Pius IX wavered for a moment in his faith in the man who had been his staunchest supporter in the Assembly of France and whose pen never tired in showing his filial loyalty to the Holy See. But it was only a passing cloud such as has fallen to the lot of many other great men. The Supreme Pontiff's hesitation was but for a day. Then he ordered a solemn office to be sung for the great advocate of religious liberty in Santa Maria Transpontina and he himself attended it in one of the private galleries.

In many ways far in advance of his times and frequently, like many another genius, misunderstood, Montalembert possessed a striking combination of talents which he used to the utmost for the honor of God and His Church. A writer of tremendous vigor and freshness, he clothed the dry bones of historical research with a literary finish that has rarely been surpassed. He was an orator capable at times of carrying away with emotion even those who were opposed to him. He was an artist and an architect who did more than any other

man of his time to foster Gothic art in Europe and to save the old monuments from destruction. Before the House of Peers he denounced the demolition and ignorant restoration carried on by government architects and succeeded in getting state protection for ancient monuments and works of art. He was a historian, accurate, painstaking and scientific, according to the opportunities at his disposal. He tells us himself that "a single date, quotation or note, apparently insignificant, has often cost me hours and somtimes days of labor."

Above all, Montalembert was a great Catholic layman who loved his Church and who was keenly appreciative of the work it had accomplished as a civilizing influence in the world. His researches into the forgotten ages opened up a new field of historical research which has even yet been scarcely half explored. He brought to light and for the first time presented in a popular way, treasures of those ages that had been called dark because their history up to that time had been hidden away in volumes hard to reach and harder to decipher. The idea of monastic life as a civilizing force in the world was a novel one in the days of Montalembert. What could these hermits accomplish who never mixed with the world? For many people it is a novel idea even in our own days and yet it is no exaggeration to say that our civilization was cradled not in the parliaments of nations or the palaces of kings, but in the monasteries of Europe. This is the thesis that stands proved in the last pages of Montalembert's *The Monks of the West.*

Such in brief is the story of the life and work of the author of this Life of St. Columban. As his researches led him to inquire into the influences that moulded the early civilization of France and Western Europe, he found four or five outstanding figures towering like giants above their contemporaries, men like St. Benedict,

St. Columban, Pope St. Gregory the Great, St. Columba of Scotland and St. Wilfrid of England, men of tremendous sanctity and, because of it, men of power to mould the trend of human events. The names of kings and warriors constantly crossed the pages of the old manuscripts, but in them he found no permanent influence for good or ill. They merely strutted across the stage and disappeared. The work of the monks and saints alone remained, and when Montalembert presented to the world his history of the beginnings of European civilization he called it simply in the language in which he wrote, *"Les Moines d'Occident"*—"The Monks of the West." Since then it has been translated into practically every European language.

Outstanding even among the great figures of those far-off ages was that of the great Irish monk, a pioneer missionary of his race, whose intrepid character, fearless love of liberty and devotion to the cause of right and justice appealed so much to the soul of Montalembert. In his Life of St. Columban, that splendid old warrior lives again before us. Step by step we can follow his footsteps across Europe. His virtues and his faults, his triumphs and his failures are all treated with Montalembert's characteristic force and love for truth and his respect for the great subject he had undertaken. More valuable still is his study of the influence of Columban on the Europe of his time. Nobody could tell that story better than this man who loved its old monuments and who spent many of the hours he spared from his busy life visiting the old ruins that covered the face of France. Between 1852 and 1857 he was member of the Chamber of Deputies for the district around Besançon, the country that had been sanctified by the work of St. Columban and which in later centuries had given so many illustrious men to the Church. The location of

each of the Columban monasteries from the Jura to Boulogne is set down from actual observation with all the care and detail so characteristic of his work. The old legends are clothed with a poetic touch that gives them a new charm, but he never fails to make a distinction between legend and fact.

The historical value of his work is all the more remarkable because of its magnitude. Any section of it might easily form a life's work in itself. Besides, when Montalembert wrote, the old sources were difficult to reach. Almost two centuries before, Mabillon, a Benedictine monk and scholar, had gathered together all the documents he could find relating to the Benedictine monasteries and their monks and published them in the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti,* but the work was incomplete. Most of Montalembert's researches had been made on original sources before the Abbé Migne and his collaborators had published their patrology. All these sources are much nearer to us now than they were to Montalembert and many of them have been edited by scholars of the first rank, who, however, have been able to add but little to the leading facts of Montalembert's history.

We could not, however, pass over all the interesting features and theories about Columban's life and work that have been touched on by these eminent scholars during the past seventy-five years. Whatever they have been able to discover or whatever solutions they may have offered for matters in question, we have tried to sum up in our footnotes and in the second part of this volume. Here and there we have hazarded a view of our own where there is still room for discussion.

E. J. McCarthy,

St. Columbans, Nebr.
Feast of the Assumption, 1927.

SAINT COLUMBAN

# I. HISTORICA

The Life of St. Columban
—Montalembert:
*The Monks of the West*

## CHAPTER I

### The Homeland of St. Columban

WHILE the missionaries of Monte Cassino[1] planted slowly and obscurely in the new kingdom of the Franks[2] that Order, the observance of which St. Gregory the Great, by his example and by his disciples, regulated and extended everywhere, a man had appeared in the Church and in Gaul as the type of a distinct race and spirit. A monk and monastic legislator, like St. Benedict, he at one moment threatened to eclipse and replace the Benedictine institution in the Catholic world. This was St. Columban.

He came from the north, as St. Maur[3] had come from the south. He was born in Ireland: he brought with him a colony of Irish monks; and his name leads us back to consider that race and country of which he has been the most illustrious representative among us.

Ireland, that virgin island on which proconsul never set foot, which never knew either the orgies or the exactions of Rome, was also the only place in the world of which the Gospel took possession without bloodshed.

This branch of the great family of Celtic nations, known under the name of Hibernians, Scots, or Gaels,

[1]Monte Cassino, a scarped and isolated rocky peak about half way between Rome and Naples—the site of the ancient monastery founded by St. Benedict in 529. A Benedictine monastery still crowns its summit.

[2]See Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, Book VII, English edition, published by P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York.

[3]St. Maur was intrusted by St. Benedict with the mission of introducing the Benedictine Rule into Gaul. He crossed the Alps about the year 542, shortly before St. Benedict died. St. Maur himself died in 565, while St. Columban was yet a young priest at Bangor.

whose descendants and language have survived to our own days in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, in Wales, and in Lower Brittany had adopted the faith of Christ with enthusiasm. At the moment when Celtic vitality seemed about to perish in Gaul and Great Britain, under the double pressure of Roman decay and Germanic invasion, the Irish appeared among all the Christian races as the most devoted to the Catholic faith, and most zealous for the spread of the Gospel. From the moment that this Green Erin, situated at the extremity of the then known world, had seen the sun of faith rise upon her, she had vowed herself to it with an ardent and tender devotion that became her very life. The course of ages has not interrupted this; the most bloody and implacable of persecutions has not shaken it; the defection of all northern Europe has not led her astray; and she maintains still, amid the splendors and miseries of modern civilization, an inextinguishable centre of faith, where survives, along with the completest orthodoxy, that admirable purity of morals which no conqueror and no adversary has ever been able to dispute, to equal, or to diminish[1].

Two slaves brought the faith to Ireland, and at the same time founded monastic life there. Such is at least the popular belief, confirmed by the most credible narratives. The Gallo-Roman Patrick, son of a relative of the great St. Martin of Tours, had been seized at sixteen by pirates, and sold as a slave into Ireland, where he kept the flocks of his master, and where hunger, cold, nakedness, and the pitiless severity of this master, initiated him into all the horrors of slavery[2]. Restored to liberty

[1]See *The World's Debt to the Irish* by Dr. James J. Walsh, New York, 1926, for a fuller treatment of Ireland's place in the history of civilization.

[2]Cf. Archbishop Healy's *Life of St. Patrick: Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars,* Dublin, 1902, p. 43.

after six years of servitude, and returned to Gaul, he saw always in his dreams the children of the poor Irish pagans whose yoke he had known, holding out to him their little arms. His sleep and his studies were equally disturbed by these visions. It seemed to him that he heard the voice of these innocents asking baptism of him, and crying—"Dear Christian child, return among us! return to save us!" After having studied in the great monastic sanctuaries of Marmoutier and Lérins[1], after having accompanied St. Germain of Auxerre[2] in the mission undertaken by that great champion of orthodoxy to root out the Pelagian heresy prevalent among the Celtic races from Great Britain, he went to Rome, obtained there a mission from Pope St. Celestine, and returned to Ireland as a bishop to preach the faith. The kings, and chiefs, and that warlike and impressionable people listened to him, followed him, and showed towards him that impassioned veneration which has become the most popular tradition of the Irish, and which fourteen centuries have not lessened. After thirty-three years of apostleship he died, leaving Ireland almost entirely converted, and moreover, filled with schools and communities destined to become a nursery of missionaries for the West.

In his own lifetime, the apostle of Ireland was astonished to find that he could no longer number the sons and daughters of chieftains who had embraced cloistral life at his bidding[3]. The rude and simple architecture

[1]Marmoutier, founded by St. Martin of Tours, during the latter quarter of the fourth century, on the banks of the Loire. Lérins, an island in the Mediterranean off the southern coast of France not far from Nice. Here was a famous monastery of the fifth century, founded by St. Honoratus in 410. See Montalembert, *Op. Cit.* p. 271.

[2]Cf. *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars,* Healy, p. 46.

[3]For a fuller account of the marvelous rise of monasticism in Ireland immediately following St. Patrick, see Archbishop Healy's *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars,* p. 91 sqq.

of these primitive monasteries has left a visible trace in the celebrated round towers which are spread over the soil of Ireland, and had so long exercised the ingenuity of archæologists, until contemporary science demonstrated that these monuments were nothing else than the belfries of cathedrals and abbeys erected between the time of the conversion of the island and its conquest by the English[1]. Among so many saints who were the successors and emulators of St. Patrick, we shall name only one, Luan, whose memory St. Bernard consecrated six centuries afterwards, by affirming that he had himself founded in his own person a hundred monasteries. This Luan was a little shepherd who had been educated by the monks of the immense abbey of Bangor. For shortly the monasteries at Bangor[2], Clonfert[3], and elsewhere, became entire towns, each of which enclosed more than three thousand cenobites. The Thebaïd reappeared in Ireland, and the West had no longer anything to envy in the history of the East.

There was besides an intellectual development, which the Eremites of Egypt had not known. The Irish communities, joined by the monks from Gaul and Rome, whom the example of Patrick had drawn to follow in his steps, entered into rivalry with the great monastic schools of Gaul. They explained Ovid there; they copied Virgil; they devoted themselves especially to Greek

[1]A number of other theories have been proposed by scholars to explain these round towers, e. g. that they were used by monks for penitential exercises like the Stylites of Asia Minor, that they were used as places of refuge during the Danish invasion, and again that they are pre-Christian and used for sun-worship. *Commonweal* (New York), Nov. 2, 1927, p. 639.

[2]At present a town of this name stands on the site of the famous monastery of Bangor about seven miles from Belfast on the southern shore of Belfast Lough.

[3]The monastery of Clonfert on the banks of the Shannon in what is now County Galway was founded by St. Brendan, the Navigator.

literature[1] they drew back from no inquiry, from no discussion; they gloried in placing boldness on a level with faith. The young Luan answered the Abbot of Bangor, who warned him against the dangers of too engrossing a study of the liberal arts; "If I have the knowledge of God, I shall never offend God; for they who disobey Him are they who know Him not." Upon which the abbot left him, saying, "My son, thou art firm in the faith, and true knowledge will put thee on the right road to heaven."

A characteristic still more distinctive of the Irish monks, as of all their nation, was the imperious necessity of spreading themselves without, of seeking or carrying knowledge and faith afar, and of penetrating into the most distant regions to watch or combat paganism. This monastic nation, therefore, became the missionary nation *par excellence.* While some were coming to Ireland to procure religious instruction, the Irish missionaries were launching forth from their island. They covered the land and seas of the West. Unwearied navigators, they landed on the most desert islands; they overflowed the Continent with their successive immigrations. they saw in incessant visions a world known and unknown to be conquered for Christ. The poem of the Pilgrimage of St. Brendan[2], that monastic Odyssey so celebrated in the middle ages, that popular prelude of the *Divina Commedia*[3], shows us the Irish monks in close

[1]Cf. *Life of St. Columban* by Helena Concannon, B. Herder, St. Louis, 1915, Appendix B, p. 286.

[2]St. Brendan of Clonfert (A. D. 483-574) to whom an early and constant tradition ascribes the first discovery of America in the early part of the sixth century. He was born in Kerry. Cf. Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars,* p. 209.

[3]*The Vision of Heaven and Hell* ascribed to Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, Scotland, in the eighth century. It became a widespread tradition in the early medieval period. It is not unlikely that Dante received the tradition of Adamnan's vision indirectly through the Irish

contact with all the dreams and wonders of the Celtic ideal. Hereafter we shall see them struggling against the reality; we shall speak of their metropolis upon the rock of Iona[1], in the Hebrides; we shall tell what they did for the conversion of Great Britain. But we must follow them first into Gaul, that country from which the Gospel had been carried to them by Patrick[2]. Towards the end of the sixth century the action of Ireland upon the countries directly subjected to Frankish dominion became decisive. She thus generously repaid her debt to Gaul. She had received Patrick; in return, she sent Columban.

school at Bobbio in northern Italy and that Christopher Columbus, a native of Genoa a few hundred miles from Bobbio, got his boyhood inspiration from the tales of the Irish voyager, St. Brendan, as he probably got his family name from some one of the many Columban townships or villages that even today are scattered through the valleys and glens of eastern France and northern Italy. Cf. *An Irish Precursor of Dante*, Boswell, London, 1908, p. 25 sqq. Article on St. Brendan, *Columbia*, May, 1925.

[1]St. Columba of Iona, the Apostle of Scotland, or as he is more frequently called, St. Columcille, died in 597. He was born near Derry in 521 and is said to have been of the family of the O'Donnells. He was therefore a contemporary of St. Columban, although his senior by a few years. He was at Iona while Columban was a monk at Bangor and, according to early traditions, a frequent visitor at the monastery and a personal friend of St. Comgall. Cf. *The Monks of the West, Op. Cit.* Book IX; Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 368; *Life of St. Columban*, Concannon, pp. 83-84.

[2]The controversy on the actual birthplace of St. Patrick has never been satisfactorily settled and probably never will. He was the child of Gallo-Roman parents who were evidently military people attached to the Roman army in Gaul and Britain. His father, Calpurnius, was either a Roman or a Gallo-Roman and his mother, Conchessa, according to tradition was a sister or a near relative of St. Martin of Tours.

The fact that his parents were moving around with the Roman army will explain the changes of residence which occurred during St. Patrick's boyhood and also in later years. Professor MacNeill favors Abergavenny in Wales as the saint's birthplace. See article "Was St. Patrick a Welshman?" Grattan Flood, *Tablet* March 12th, 1927.

## CHAPTER II

### Europe After the Invasions[1]

BEFORE we study the action of the great Celtic missionary upon the kingdoms and people of the Franks, it is important to observe one of the distinct characteristics of the monastic occupation of Gaul. We should greatly deceive ourselves did we suppose that the monks chose the Gallo-Roman cities or populous towns for their principal establishments. Episcopal cities like Poitiers, Arles, or Paris, were not the places which they preferred, nor in which they abounded most. They were almost always to be found there, thanks to the zeal of the bishops who sought and drew them to their neighborhood. But their own proper impulse, their natural instinct, I know not what current of ideas always swaying them, led them far from towns, and even from the fertile and inhabited rural districts, towards the forests and deserts which then covered the greater part of the soil of the country.

They took special delight in such situations, where we behold them in close conflict with nature, with all her obstacles and dangers; and where we find all that exuberant vigor and life which everywhere distinguishes the springtime of monastic institutions, and which for two centuries renewed a kind of Thebaïd in the forests of Gaul.

When the disciples of St. Benedict and St. Columban[2]

[1]Montalembert, *The Monks of the West*, Book VI, Chapter V, pp. 497-502.

[2]In the first half of the sixth century St. Maur founded Glanfeuil, the first Benedictine monastery in Gaul. We know that this event occurred before A. D. 547 because Theudebert I who died in that year is mentioned by early chroniclers as being on friendly terms with St. Maur. St. Columban did not begin his work in France until some thirty years later.

came to settle in Gaul, most of its provinces bore an aspect sadly similar. Roman tyranny and taxation in the first place, and then the ravages of the Barbarian invasions, had changed entire countries into desert and solitary places. That *pagus* which, in the time of Cæsar, had furnished thousands of soldiers against the common enemy, now showed only some few inhabitants scattered over a country allowed to run waste, where a spontaneous and savage vegetation disputed all attempts at cultivation, and gradually transformed the land into forests.

These new forests extended by degrees to the immense clumps of dark and impenetrable woods, which had always covered a considerable part of the soil of Gaul. One example, among a thousand, will prove the abundance of desolation[1]. Upon the right bank of the Loire, five leagues below Orleans, in that district which is now the garden of France, the Gallo-Roman *castrum* of Magdunum, which occupied the site of the existing town of Meung, had completely disappeared under the woods, when the monk Liephard directed his steps there, accompanied by a single disciple, in the sixth century; in place of the numerous inhabitants of former times, there stood only trees, the interlaced branches and trunks of which formed a sort of impenetrable barrier. And thus also Columban found nothing but idols abandoned in the midst of the wood, upon that site of Luxeuil which had formerly been occupied by the temples and baths of the Romans[2].

[1]Contemporary records of the period as well as ancient hagiographies are filled with passages that make it possible for us to form a picture of the aspect of Europe after the barbarian invasions. The early chronicles of the monastic foundations, some of them exceedingly detailed and vivid, were incorporated by Mabillon in the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, Paris, 1669.

[2]"Aspera vastitate solitudinis et scopulorum interpositione loca." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 6; I. 10. *(Vitae Columbani Abbatis Discipulorumque Eius Libri Duo Auctore Iona*, edited by Dr. Bruno Krusch in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica-Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, Vol. IV, Hanover, 1902.)

The intermediate regions between the great forests and the fields, between the mountains and the cultivated plains, were with too much justice entitled deserts, because the population had abandoned them till the monks brought back fertility and life. In the northern part of the country, occupied by the Burgundians, on the north of the Rhone alone, six great deserts existed at the end of the sixth century,—the desert of Reome, between Tonnerre and Montbard; the desert of Morvan; the desert of Jura; the desert of the Vosges, where Luxeuil and Lure were about to be born; the desert of Switzerland, between Bienne and Lucerne; and the desert of Guyère, between the Savine and the Aar.

We must then imagine Gaul and all the neighboring countries, the whole extent of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and both banks of the Rhine—that is to say, the richest and most populous countries of modern Europe—covered with forests such as are scarcely to be seen in America, and of which there does not now remain the slightest trace in the old world[1].

To plunge into these terrible forests, to encounter these monstrous animals, the tradition of which remains everywhere, and whose bones are still sometimes exhumed, required a courage of which nothing in the existing world can give us an idea. In all that now remains to be conquered of American forests and deserts, the modern adventurer penetrates armed with all the inventions of industry and mechanical art, provided with all the resources of modern life, sustained by the certainty of success, by the consciousness of progress,

[1]The tradition of these immense forests of early medieval Europe is still preserved in many place names in France according to Montalembert *Op. Cit.* p. 500, foot-note. For instance, *Spinetum*, afterwards Boheries, *Spinosus locus*, Espinlieu; *Spinalium*, Epinal, and others, L'Epine, L'Espinay, La Ronciére, Le Roncier, La Ronceraye, from *Roncereium*, the ronceray.

and urged forward by the immense pressure of the civilization that follows and supports him.

But at that time no such help came to the monk, who attacked these gloomy woods without arms, without sufficient implements, and often without a single companion. He came out of a devastated, decrepit, and powerless old world, to plunge into the unknown. But he bore with him a strength that nothing has ever surpassed or equalled, the strength conferred by faith in a living God, the Protector and Rewarder of innocence, by contempt of all material joy, and by an exclusive devotion to the spiritual and future life. He thus advanced, undaunted and serene; and often without thinking of what he did, he opened a road to all the benefits of agriculture, labor, and Christian civilization.

See, then, these men of prayer and penitence, who were at the same time the bold pioneers of Christian civilization and the modern world; behold them taming that world of wild and savage nature in a thousand different places. They plunged into the darkness carrying light with them, a light which was never more to be extinguished; and this light, advancing step by step, kindled everywhere those home-fires which were so many beacons upon the way to heaven,—"from glory to glory"[1], and which were to be centres of life and blessing for the people whom they instructed and edified; "In thy light shall we see light."[2]

All these men had the text of the Apostle always on their lips, "If any will not work, neither let him eat;" and that of the Psalmist, "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands." These texts are perpetually appealed to in their legends, and justly, for they are an epitome of their doctrine and life[3].

[1]II Cor. III, 18.
[2]Ps. XXXVI, 9.
[3]Montalembert, *The Monks of the West, Op. Cit.* pp. 534-535.

The influence of such labor and example rapidly made itself felt upon the rustic populations who lived in the neighborhood of this new cultivation, or who followed the solitaries into the forest to see their works and to find in them guides and protectors. From admiration the peasants gladly passed to imitation. Often they became the voluntary coadjutors of the monks, and, without embracing monastic life, aided them to clear the ground and build their dwellings. Sometimes the brigands themselves, who at first had sought their lives, or attempted to prevent them from entering the forest, ended by becoming agriculturalists after their example. The rapid increase of rural population in the neighborhood of monastic establishments is thus explained, and also the immense amount of labor which the monks could undertake, the results of which exist and astonish us still.

## CHAPTER III

### Moulding a New Civilization

LABOR and prayer formed the double sphere in which the existence of the monastic colonizers always flowed, and the double end of their long and unwearied efforts. But they certainly did not think it sufficient to initiate the rustic population of Frankish Gaul in the laborious habits and best processes of agriculture. They had still more at heart the cultivation of so many souls infinitely precious in the eyes of God and of the servants of God. By their example and exhortations, by their vigilant charity and at the same time by their oral instruction, they dug in those rude hearts the deep furrows where they sowed abundantly the seeds of virtue and eternal life[1].

To their example, and above all to their influence, the beneficent solicitude of the provincial Councils of Gaul for the spiritual instruction of the rural population must be attributed. "The priests," says the Council of Rouen[2], "must warn their parishioners that they ought to permit or cause their neatherds, swineherds, and other herdsmen, their ploughmen, and those who are continually in the fields or woods, and live there like the animals, to attend Mass, on Sundays and holidays at least. Those who neglect this shall have to answer for their souls, and shall have to render a severe account. For the Lord when He came upon the earth did not choose orators or nobles for His disciples, but fishers and men of the humblest class; and it was not to high intelligences, but

[1]Montalembert, *The Monks of the West, Op. Cit.* pp. 538-540.
[2]The Council of Rouen, A. D. 650.

to the poor shepherds, that the angel announced in the first place the nativity of our Lord."

But how could they have supplied the spiritual necessities of all that population of shepherds and laborers, spread over immense regions not more than half inhabited, if the monks had not come to second and succeed the secular clergy, establishing among them at a thousand different points, and precisely in the quarters least accessible, their cells and oratories? These oratories in time became churches; around them gathered the cottages of the peasants; the latter were henceforth sure of sharing in all the benefits of spiritual paternity, conferred upon them by men often issuing from the noblest and most powerful races among the masters and conquerors of the country. They voluntarily shared their fatigues and privations, they led a life as hard as, and even harder than theirs, and asked of them, in exchange for such services and example, only that they should join them in praising the Lord.

Our solitaries, thus becoming, often against their will, the fathers and leaders of a numerous spiritual progeny, saw themselves surrounded by a double family, that of their disciples and that of their dependents, the monastic and the rustic community, both united by faith, labor, and common prayer. From the midst of forests so long unapproachable, and deserts henceforward repeopled, arose everywhere the hymn of joy, gratitude and adoration. The prophecy of Isaias was verified under their very eyes for them and by them:—"Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall

be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."[1]

And are not we tempted sometimes to give ear and listen whether some faint echo of that delightful harmony does not float across the ocean of time? Certainly earth has never raised to heaven a sweeter concert than that of so many pure and pious voices full of faith and enthusiasm, rising from the glades of the ancient forests, from the sides of rocks, and from the banks of waterfalls or torrents, to celebrate their new-born happiness, like the birds under the leaves, or like our dear little children in their charming lispings, when they greet with joyful and innocent confidence the dawn of a day in which they foresee neither storms nor decline.

The Church has known days more resplendent and more solemn, days better calculated to raise the admiration of sages, the fervor of pious souls, and the unshaken confidence of her children: but I know not if she has ever breathed forth a charm more touching and pure than in the spring-time of monastic life.

In that Gaul which had borne for five centuries the ignominious yoke of the Cæsars, which had groaned under barbarian invasions, and where everything still breathed blood, fire, and carnage, Christian virtue, watered by the spirit of penitence and sacrifice, began to bud forth everywhere. Everywhere faith seemed to blossom like flowers after the winter; everywhere moral life revived and bloomed like the verdure of the woods; everywhere under the ancient arches of the Druidical forests was celebrated the fresh betrothal of the Church with the Frankish people.

[1]Isaias LV. 12, 13.

## CHAPTER IV

### An Exile for Christ[1]

ST. COLUMBAN was born the same year in which the patriarch of Monte Cassino died[2]. Instructed from his infancy in literature and the liberal arts, he had also to struggle early with the temptations of the flesh[3]. His beauty, which attracted all eyes, exposed him, says the monk who has written his life, to insidious temptations from beautiful maidens. It was in vain that he plunged into the study of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and Holy Scripture. The goad of voluptousness pricked him perpetually.

He went to the cell inhabited by a pious recluse to consult her. "Twelve years ago," she answered him, "I myself left my own house to enter into a war against sin. Inflamed by the fires of youth, thou shalt attempt in vain to escape from thy frailty while thou remainest upon thy native soil. Hast thou forgotten Adam, Samson, David and Solomon, all lost by the seductions of beauty and love? Young man, to save thyself, thou must flee."[4] He listened, believed her, and decided to go away.

His mother attempted to deter him, prostrating herself before him upon the threshold of the door; he

[1] "Peregrinus pro Christo," an expression frequently used by the early Irish missionaries.

[2] See II, Chap. II, p. 172. St. Benedict died according to early chronicles in 543 A. D., while the most probable date for St. Columban's birth is 529 or at the latest 530 which was really the year in which St. Benedict founded Monte Cassino.

Cardinal Moran places his birth definitely in 530 and Bruno Krusch follows the same opinion. We can attach great importance to Dr. Krusch's view because no other scholar has devoted so much attention or labor to the study of the Columban manuscripts.

[3] *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 3.

[4] Ibid.

stepped over her body, and left the province of Leinster, where he was born. After spending some time at Lough Erne[1] with Sinnell, a learned doctor who made him compose a commentary on the Psalms[2], he found refuge at Bangor, among the many monks still imbued with the primitive fervor that had assembled them there under the cross of the holy abbot Comgall[3].

But this first apprenticeship of the holy war was not enough. The adventurous temper of his race, the passion for pilgrimage and preaching, drew him beyond the seas[4]. He heard incessantly the voice that had spoken to Abraham echoing in his ears, "Go out of thine own country, and from thy father's house, into the land which I shall show thee." That land was ours. The abbot attempted in vain to retain him. Columban left Bangor with twelve other monks, crossed Great Britain[5], and reached Gaul.

[1]In the Island of Cleenish in Lough Erne. Sinnell had studied at Clonard in County Meath, the most famous Irish seminary of the time. See Concannon, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 27; also Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 372.

[2]A manuscript is still preserved at the Ambrosian Library at Milan (brought there from Bobbio) which many scholars claim to be St. Columban's Commentary on the Psalms written at Cleenish and probably revised later. This Commentary is mentioned in a ninth century catalogue of the library of St. Gall and a tenth century catalogue in that of Bobbio as "Expositio Sancti Columbani super Omnes Psalmos." See *Life of St. Columban*, Concannon, p. 37.

[3]*Vita Columbani*, Jonas I. 4. Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 367. In the early fifties of the sixth century while St. Columban was a pupil at Cleenish, Comgall established a retreat in another island of Lough Erne. Thus Columban would have become acquainted with his sanctity and would have followed him to Bangor when he founded his monastery there in 559. According to our chronology Columban was a man of twenty-nine or thirty when he came to Bangor.

[4]"Coepit peregrinationem desiderare" is the phrase used by Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 4.

[5]"Ad Britannicos perveniunt sinus." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 4. This may refer to Great Britain or Brittany on the Coast of France. For a discussion on the meaning of the text see Concannon, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 295. Also II, Chap. IV, p. 196.

He found the Catholic faith in existence there, but Christian virtue and ecclesiastical discipline unknown or outraged—thanks to the fury of the wars and the negligence of the bishops. He devoted himself during several years to traversing the country, preaching the Gospel, and especially to giving an example of the humility and charity which he taught to all[1].

Arriving in the course of his apostolic wanderings in Burgundy, he was received there by King Gunthran[2], of all the grandsons of Clovis the one whose life appears to have been least blamable, and who had most sympathy for the monks. His eloquence delighted the king and his lords. Fearing that he would leave them, Gunthran offered him whatever he chose if he would remain; but the Irishman answered that he had not left his own country to seek wealth, but to follow Christ and bear his cross. The king persisted, and told him that there were in his kingdoms many savage and solitary places

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 5.

[2]Jonas calls the king who received Columban *Sigibert*, a statement which, if correct, would place Columban's arrival in Gaul before A. D. 575, the year in which Sigibert was assassinated. The difficulty is that Sigibert does not seem to have ever been King of Burgundy. His brother, Gunthran, to whom nearly all Columban's biographers give the credit of being the king who granted him territory for his monastery, ruled in Burgundy from 561 to 593.

He was also guardian for Childebert II after the assassination of the latter's father in 575. One eleventh century manuscript has Childebert in the *Vita Columbani* instead of Sigibert, but only as a conjecture.

The weight of probability is that Jonas wrote *Sigibert*. It is scarcely likely that Jonas, who is otherwise so careful, would have been mistaken in the name. Besides, that Jonas really meant Sigibert is clear from *Vita Columbani*, I. 18, where he speaks of him again:

"Sigibertus etenim, cuius superius fecimus mentionem . . . Perempto itaque Sigiberto, Childebertus filius eius regni sceptra suscepit."

This historical narrative of Jonas agrees with that of St. Gregory of Tours. Bruno Krusch thinks that Jonas had before him the history of Gregory of Tours where the assassination of Sigibert is menitoned, IV. 50-51. Gunthran is mentioned only once in contemporary hagiographies—that of St. Rusticula. *V. S. Rusticulae, Acta SS. O. S. B. II*, p. 140. See II, Chap. II, p. 203.

where he might find the cross and win heaven, but that he must on no account leave Gaul, nor dream of converting other nations, till he had assured the salvation of the Franks and Burgundians.

Columban yielded to his desire, and chose for his dwelling-place the ancient Roman castle of Annegray[1]. He led the simplest life there with his companions. He lived for entire weeks without any other food than the grass of the fields, the bark of the trees, and the bilberries that are to be found in the fir-woods; he received other provisions only from the charity of the neighbors. Often he separated himself from his disciples to plunge alone into the woods, and live in common with the animals[2].

There, as afterwards, in his long and close communion with the bare and savage nature of these desert places, nothing alarmed him, nor did he cause fear to any creature. Everything obeyed his voice. The birds came to receive his caresses, and the squirrels descended from the tree-tops to hide themselves in the folds of his cowl[3]. He expelled a bear from the cavern which became his cell; he took from another bear a dead stag, whose skin served to make shoes for his brethren[4].

[1]Annegray still exists as a little village of Haute-Saône. Annegray, Luxeuil and Fontaines, the three monasteries founded by St. Columban, were situated in the ancient territory of Sequania in the forest of the Vosges.

[2]The *carcair* or retreat was a common feature of Irish monasticism. It consisted of a cave or little cell apart where the monks retired for special penance and prayer. The cave which St. Columban used for these retreats in the wilderness is still pointed out as it was in the time of Jonas some seven miles from Annegray. Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 8,—"Distabatque ab Anagrate locus plus minusve milibus septem."

[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 17. Columban's love of nature and the wild things of the forest is vouched for by Jonas on no less authority than that of Chagnoald, Bishop of Laon, who had accompanied Columban in his exile across the Rhine in A. D. 610 and was his constant attendant in the wilderness near Lake Constance.

[4]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 17. The *calceamenta* mentioned by Jonas were the roughly shaped shoes of untanned hide worn by the early Irish monks.

One day, while he wandered in the depths of the wood, bearing a volume of Holy Scripture[1] on his shoulder, and meditating whether the ferocity of the beasts, who could not sin, was not better than the rage of men, which destroyed their souls, he saw a dozen wolves approach and surround him on both sides. He remained motionless, repeating the words, "Deus in adjutorium." The wolves, after having touched his garments with their mouths, seeing him without fear, passed upon their way. He pursued his, and a few steps farther on, heard a noise of human voices, which he recognized as those of a band of German brigands, of the nation of the Suevi, who then laid waste that country. He did not see them; but he thanked God for having preserved him from this double danger, in which may be seen a double symbol of the constant struggle which the monks had to maintain in their laborious warfare against the wild forces of nature, and the still more savage barbarity of men.

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 8. In the Codex Bobbiensis in the National Library at Turin is preserved part of a fourth century manuscript of the Gospels in Irish script. It has a seventeenth century marginal note to the effect that according to tradition it was the book that St. Columban carried around with him in his satchel. "Volumen ms. . . . . quod ut traditum fuit illud erat liber, quem Beatus Columbanus Abbas in pera secum ferre consueverat." It also contains a correction which is said to be in St. Columban's own handwriting. cf. *Der hl. Kolumban,* Johann Joseph Laux, p. 112.

## CAPTER V

### Life at Luxeuil

AT the end of some years, the increasing number of Columban's disciples obliged him to seek another residence[1], and by the help of one of the principal ministers of the Frank king, Agnoald, whose wife was a Burgundian of very high family, he obtained from Gunthran[2] the site of another strong castle, named Luxeuil[3], where there had been Roman baths, magnificently ornamented, and where the idols formerly worshipped by the Gauls were still found in the neighboring forests. Upon the ruins of these two civilizations the great monastic metropolis of Austrasia and Burgundy was to be planted.

Luxeuil was situated upon the confines of these two kingdoms, at the foot of the Vosges, and north of that Sequania, the southern part of which had already been

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 10.

[2]Agnoald's service is inferred from the Life of St. Agilus, afterwards Abbot of Rebais. *Vita S. Agili, Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 317. See also Chapter VII and Chapter XXVII. King Gunthran of Orleans died in 593. He is not mentioned by Jonas. His connection with Columban is merely a conjecture. Luxeuil was most probably founded in 590 A. D. Cf. *Vita S. Salabergae, Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 423. "Columbanus peregrinus ex Hibernia adveniens ex munificentia Childeberti regis . . . . construxit." The author, who Mabillon thinks is almost a contemporary, is speaking of the monastery of Luxeuil.

[3]Because of its mineral springs, Luxeuil is at present a popular health resort known as Luxeuil-les-Bains in the department of Haute-Saône. The remains of the old abbey still exist as part of a diocesan seminary.

The territory around it is rich in religious fervor and tradition. It was the birth place of the great St. Bernard of Clairvaux, while Cîteaux, in which was revived the fervor of the old time monasticism in the eleventh century, is not far distant.

for more than a century graced by the abbey of Condat[1]. The district that extends over the sides of the Vosges and Jura, since so illustrious and prosperous under the name of Franche-Comté, then consisted, for a length of sixty leagues, and a breadth of ten or fifteen, of nothing but parallel chains of inaccessible defiles, divided by impenetrable forests, and bristling with immense pine-woods, which descended from the heights of the highest mountains, to overshadow the course of the rapid and pure streams of the Doubs, Dessoubre, and Loue. The barbarian invasions, and especially that of Attila, had reduced the Roman towns into ashes, and annihilated all agriculture and population. The forest and the wild beasts had taken possession of that solitude which it was reserved for the disciples of Columban to transform into fields and pastures.

Disciples collected abundantly around the Irish colonizer. He could soon count several hundreds of them in the three monasteries which he had built in succession, and which he himself governed[2]. The noble Franks and Burgundians, overawed by the sight of these great creations of work and prayer, brought their sons to him, lavished gifts upon him, and often came to ask him to cut their long hair, the sign of nobility and freedom, and admit them into the ranks of his army. Labor and prayer attained here, under the strong arm of Columban, to proportions hitherto unknown. The multitude of

[1]Condat was founded by St. Romain about 430 A. D. and was consequently one of the pre-Columban and pre-Benedictine monasteries in Gaul. It retained its fame as a monastery all through the Middle Ages, but became, like the Columban monasteries, the inheritance of the Benedictine Order.

[2]Some ancient hagiographies mention as many as six hundred monks under the crosier of St. Columban at Luxeuil and its neighboring colonies. The biographer of St. Valery gives two hundred and twenty. The three monasteries mentioned by Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 6 and I. 10, are *Anagrates*, Annegray, *Luxovium* or Luxeuil and *Fontanas*, modern Fontaines. All three still exist as place names.

poor serfs and rich lords became so great that he could organize that perpetual service called *Laus perennis*[1], which already existed at Agaune, on the other side of the Jura and Lake Leman, where, night and day, the voices of the monks, "unwearied as those of angels," arose to celebrate the praises of God in an unending song.

Rich and poor were equally bound to the agricultural labors, which Columban himself directed. In the narrative of the wonders that mingle with every page of his life, they are all to be seen employed successively in ploughing, in mowing, in reaping, and in cutting wood[2]. With the impetuosity natural to him, he made no allowance for any weakness. He required even the sick to thrash the wheat. An article of his Rule ordained that the monk should go to rest so fatigued that he should fall asleep on the way, and should get up before he had slept sufficiently[3]. It is at the cost of this excessive and perpetual labor that the half of our own country and of ungrateful Europe had been restored to cultivation and life.

[1]The *Laus Perennis* consisted of a perpetual chanting of the Divine Office. The monks were divided into six choirs, more or less, according to the length of time required to recite the full Office. These choirs relieved each other, singing both night and day. It was a common custom in most of the large monasteries through the Middle Ages.

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 13.

[3]*Regula S. Columbani*, Seebass Edition, Chapter X.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Easter Controversy[1]

TWENTY years passed thus, during which the reputation of Columban increased and extended afar. But his influence was not undisputed. He displeased one portion of the Gallo-Frank clergy, in the first place, by the Irish peculiarities of his costume and tonsure, perhaps also by the zeal with which he attempted, in his epistles, to remind the bishops of their duties, and certainly by his steadfast perseverance in celebrating Easter according to Irish usage, on the fourteenth day of the moon, when that day happened on a Sunday, instead of celebrating it with all the rest of the Church, on the Sunday after the fourteenth day[2]. This peculiarity, at once trifling and oppressive, disturbed his whole life, and weakened his authority; for his pertinacity on this point reached so far that he actually attempted more than once to bring the Holy See itself to his side.

[1]See *Life of St. Columban* by George Metlake, p. 127, Philadelphia, 1914. No mention is made by Jonas of the Easter controversy. The letters of St. Columban on the subject are extant and have been edited by Wilhelm Gundlach in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* Vol. III, Hanover, 1892.

[2]*Epistola Domino Sancto* I, *M. G. H.* III, p. 156. Columban claims the authority of Anatolius for the Irish custom and assumes that Anatolius had the sanction of St. Jerome because the latter had spoken of him as "a man of wondrous learning." As a matter of fact, the work on which the Irish custom rested was not written by Anatolius but by an unknown British monk of the sixth century who wrote under the name of Anatolius. The Irish custom was probably Patrician, but many other attempts had been made to revise the calendar since St. Patrick left Gaul.

Pseudo-Anatolius was universally accepted as genuine and trustworthy in the Irish and British schools. In our days of scientific criticism it is easy enough for scholars to discover the true character of such a work, but it was not so easy in the days of Columban.

The details of his struggle with the bishops of Gaul remain unknown; but the resolution he displayed may be understood, by some passages of his letter to the synod[1] or council which met to examine this question. The singular mixture of humility and pride, and the manly and original eloquence with which this epistle is stamped, do not conceal what was strange and irregular in the part which he arrogated to himself in the Church. Though he calls himself Columban the sinner, it is very apparent that he felt himself the guide and instructor of those to whom he spoke.

He begins by thanking God that, owing to His grace, so many holy bishops now assemble to consider the interests of faith and morality. He exhorts them to assemble more frequently, despite the dangers and difficulties that they might meet on the road, and wishes them to occupy themselves, under the leadership of Jesus Christ, not only with the question of Easter, but with other canonical observances cruelly neglected. He prides himself on his own trials, and what he calls the persecution of which he has been the victim.

He also advocates union between the secular and regular clergy; and his language then becomes more touching and solemn. "I am not the author of this difference; I have come into these parts, a poor stranger, for the cause of Christ the Saviour, our common God and Lord; I ask of your holinesses but a single grace: that you will permit me to live in silence in the depth of these forests, near the bones of seventeen brethren whom I have already seen die: I shall pray for you with those who remain to me, as I ought, and as I have always

[1]Many commentators identify the council that was called to discuss Columban's attitude on the Easter celebration with the Council of Chalons, A. D. 602-3. See II, Chap. I, p. 153.

done for twelve years[1]. Ah! let us live with you in this Gaul where we now are, since we are destined to live with each other in Heaven, if we are found worthy to enter there. Despite our luke-warmness, we will follow, as best we can, the doctrines and precepts of our Lord and the apostles. These are our weapons, our shields, and our glory. To remain faithful to them we have left our country, and are come among you. It is yours, holy fathers, to determine what must be done with some poor veterans, some old pilgrims[2], and if it would not be better to console than to disturb them.

"I dare not go to you for fear of entering into some contention with you[3], but I confess to you the secrets of

[1] *Epistola Columbani* II, *M. G. H.* p. 162. "Ut mihi liceat cum vestra pace et caritate in his silvis silere et vivere iuxta ossa nostrorum fratrum decem et septem defunctorum, sicut usque nunc licuit nobis inter vos vixisse duodecim annis, ut pro vobis, sicut usque nunc fecimus, oremus, ut debemus."

The reference to the twelve years which Columban expressly says he had spent amongst them has made this Council a landmark for commentators in computing the chronology of the saint's life, but has also given rise to a great deal of difficulty.

It would indicate that in Columban's mind at least some big event in his life had occurred twelve years previously, that is 590 or 591, which it is not unlikely to suppose would have been the founding of Luxeuil. This would correspond with what Jonas writes, that when he was banished from Luxeuil in 610 it was in the twentieth year after he had taken up his residence there. "Egressus ergo vir sanctus cum suis vicesimo anno post incolatum heremi illius." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 20, *M. G. H* p. 92.

[2] "Vos vero, patres sancti, videte, quid faciatis ad istos veteranos pauperes et peregrinos senes; ut ego arbitror, melius vobis erit, illos confortare, quam conturbare." *Epistola Columbani*, II, *M. G. H.* p. 162. Although Columban speaks here in the third person it is reasonable to infer from the context that he includes himself amongst the "poor veterans and old pilgrims." It is not likely that any of Columban's companions were older than himself.

Thus he considered himself an old man in A.D. 603 and he was speaking very seriously to men who were probably advanced in age. This expression could be more appropriately used by a man of seventy-three rather than of fifty-six. This consideration is of some importance in fixing the chronology of his life.

[3] Columban evidently knew how hard it was to control his Celtic impetuosity.

my conscience, and how I believe, above all, in the tradition of my country, which is, besides, that of St. Jerome."[1]

All this is mingled with troublesome calculation about the celebration of Easter, and a great array of Scripture texts. It ends thus: "God forbid that we should delight our enemies—namely, the Jews, heretics, and pagans—by strife among Christians. . . . If God guides you to expel me from the desert which I have sought here beyond the seas, I should only say with Jonas, 'Take me up and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm.'

"But before you throw me overboard, it is your duty to follow the example of the sailors, and to try first to come to land; perhaps even it might not be excess of presumption to suggest to you that many men follow the broad way, and that when there are a few who direct themselves to the narrow gate that leads to life, it would be better for you to encourage than to hinder them, lest you fall under the condemnation of that text which says, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.'

"The harder the struggle, the more glorious is the crown. They, says St. Gregory, who do not avoid the visible evil can scarcely believe in the hidden good. For this reason St. Jerome enjoins the bishops to imitate the apostles, and the monks to follow the fathers, who have been perfect. The rules of the priests and those of the monks are very different; let each keep faithfully the profession which he has embraced, but let all follow the

[1] *Epistola Columbani* II, *M. G. H.* Vol. III, p. 162. His belief that his custom has the approval of St. Jerome is based, as we have seen, on the work of pseudo-Anatolius.

Gospel and Christ their head. . . . Yet pray for us, as we, despite our lowliness, pray for you.

"Regard us not as strangers to you; for all of us, whether Gauls or Britons, Spaniards or others, are members of the same body[1]. I pray you all, my holy and patient fathers and brethren, to forgive the loquacity and boldness of a man whose task is above his strength."[2]

It is doubtful if this attitude had not shaken the influence which the virtues and sanctity of Columban had won for him among the Gallo-Franks[3]. But he soon recovered it entirely in the conflict for the honor of Christian morals which he undertook against Queen Brunechildis and her grandson, and which we must relate in some detail, because this struggle was the first, and not the least remarkable, of those which arose on various occasions between the monks and Christian kings, who had been so long and naturally allied.

[1]The jealousies of race and nationality were evidently as strong in Columban's day as they are now.

[2]*Epistolae Columbani* II, *M. G. H.* III, p. 164. "Supra vires" may mean mental or physical strength. It may have been said in humility and refer to his intellectual ability, but it is just as likely that it refers to declining physical strength.

[3]As far as we know the Burgundian Bishops never enforced any decision against St. Columban's custom of celebrating Easter. Having failed to obtain a favorable answer to a letter written to Pope St. Gregory three years before, he made another appeal to Pope Sabinian, which was also fruitless. He seems to have followed the Irish custom until he left Luxeuil in A.D. 610. His successors conformed to the universal usage, and the controversy ceased.

## CHAPTER VII

### In Conflict with a King

THE Frank government in Gaul was divided into three distinct kingdoms, Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy. The ancient kingdom of the Burgundians or of Burgundy, finally conquered by the sons of Clovis, had been reconstituted by his grandson Gunthran[1], the same who gave so good a reception to Columban, and it was at the northern extremity of this kingdom that Luxeuil was founded. Gunthran having died without issue, Burgundy passed to his nephew, the young Childebert II., already king of Austrasia, the son of the celebrated Brunechildis. He died shortly after, leaving two sons under age, Theudebert II. and Theuderic II. The succession was divided between them: Theudebert had Austrasia, and Theuderic, Burgundy; but their grandmother Brunechildis immediately constituted herself their guardian and took possession of the power royal in the two kingdoms, whilst her terrible enemy, Fredegunde, whom Gunthran had so justly named "the enemy of God and man," governed Neustria in the name of her son Clothaire II., who was also a minor.

[1]Jonas (*Vita Columbani,* I. 18, 1.6.) is very definite on the fact that it was Sigibert, who died in 575, who received Columban and granted him the territory of Annegray. Here he shows that he was well acquainted with Childebert's name and even his age when he died, "intra aduliscentiae annos." Childebert was then in his early twenties. His father Sigibert and his wife, Brunechildis, a Spanish princess, were married in 566. It is not at all likely that Jonas wrote Sigibert for Childebert by mistake, as some commentators think. He was evidently in possession of another tradition which, no matter how difficult it may be to reconcile with facts culled from other sources, is more likely to have been the story that Jonas heard from the comrades of St. Columban. See *Life of St. Columban,* Metlake, p. 145.

The whole of Frankish Gaul was thus in the hands of two women, who governed it in the name of three kings, all minors. But shortly the great feudal lords of Austrasia, among whom the indomitable independence of the Franks had been preserved more intact than among the Neustrians, disgusted by the violent and arbitrary bearing of Brunechildis obliged the eldest of her grandsons to expel her from his kingdom. She consoled herself by establishing her residence with the young king Theuderic in Burgundy, where she continued to exercise over the Burgundian nobles and bishops that haughty and often cruel sway which had made her presence intolerable in Austrasia.

To identify Brunechildis in any degree with her impure and sinister rival, who was at once much more guilty and more prosperous than she, would be to judge her too severely. Gregory of Tours has praised her beauty, her good manners, her prudence and affability; and Gregory the Great, in congratulating the Franks on having so good a queen, honored her with public eulogiums, especially in his celebrated diploma relative to the Abbey of St. Martin of Autun, which she had built and endowed richly upon the spot where the holy bishop of Tours, going into the country of the Eduens, had destroyed the last sanctuary of vanquished paganism at the peril of his life. This abbey, long celebrated for its wealth and for its flourishing schools, became afterwards the sepulchre of Brunechildis; and, nine centuries after her cruel death, a daily distribution to the poor, called "the alms of Brunehault," kept her memory popular still.

But Brunechildis, as she grew old, retained only the dauntless warmth of her early years; she preserved neither the generosity nor the uprightness. She sacrificed everything to a passion for rule, and to the temptation of re-establishing a kind of Roman monarchy. This

thirst for sovereignty led her so far—she, whose youth had been without reproach—as to encourage her grandsons in that polygamy which seems to have been the melancholy indulgence of the Germanic and especially of the Merovingian princes[1]. From the fear of having a rival in power and honor near the throne of Theuderic, she opposed with all her might every attempt to replace his concubines by a legitimate queen, and when, finally, he determined on espousing a Visigoth princess, Brunechildis, though herself the daughter of a Visigoth king, succeeded in disgusting her grandson with his bride, and made him repudiate her at the end of a year. The bishop of Vienne, St. Desiderius, who had advised the king to marry, was murdered by the ruffians whom the queen-mother had hired to assassinate him[2].

However, the young Theuderic had religious instincts. He was rejoiced to have in his kingdom a holy man like Columban, and went often to visit him[3]. Irish zeal took advantage of this to reprove him for his disorderly life, and to exhort him to seek a legitimate spouse, that the royal race might spring from an honorable queen. The young king promised amendment, but Brunechildis easily turned him away from these good resolutions. Columban having gone to visit her at the manor of Bourcheresse[4], she presented to him Theuderic's four illegitimate sons[5].

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I, 18.

[2]St. Desiderius was summoned to the Council of Chalons, 603, to answer a vile slander and was soon after stoned to death. The Council was presided over by Bishop Aredius, a creature of the Queen and a man of bad reputation. If not the same body it was undoubtedly a similar one that arraigned Columban before it.

[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 18.

[4]*Brocariacum*, modern Bruyères-le-Châtel (Dep. Seine-et-Oise)—Krusch.

[5]This event evidently occurred after 607, when Theuderic's fourth son was born. (Krusch. Note—Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, p. 86.) Theuderic was not more than twenty years old at the time.

"What would these children with me?" said the monk.

"They are the sons of the king," said the queen; "strengthen them by thy blessing."

"No!" answered Columban, "they shall not reign, for they are of bad origin."

From that moment Brunechildis swore war to the death against him. She began by debarring the monks of the monastery governed by Columban from leaving their convent, and the people from receiving them or giving them the slightest help.

Columban endeavored to enlighten Theuderic and lead him back to a better way. He went to visit him at his royal seat of Époisses[1]. Hearing that the abbot had arrived, but would not enter the palace, the king sent him a sumptuous repast. Columban refused to accept anything from the hand of him who forbade the servants of God to have access to the homes of other men, and at the sound of his curse, all the vessels which contained the various meats were miraculously broken in pieces. The king, alarmed by that wonder, came with his grandmother to ask pardon and to promise amendment. Columban, mollified, returned to his monastery, where he soon learned that Theuderic had fallen back into his habitual debauchery. Then he wrote to the king a letter full of vehement reproaches in which he threatened him with excommunication.

Thus, this stranger, this Irish missionary, the favored guest of King Gunthran, would venture to go the length of excommunicating the King of Burgundy, the heir of his benefactor! Brunechildis had no difficulty in raising the principal lords of the court of Theuderic against that unaccustomed boldness; she even undertook to persuade

[1] *Spissa.* Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 19. Époisses (Dep. Côte-d'Or).

the bishops to interfere in order to censure the rule of the new institution[1].

Excited by all that he heard going on around him, Theuderic resolved to take the offensive, and presented himself at Luxeuil to demand from the abbot an explanation why he went against the customs of the country, and why the interior of the convent was not open to all Christians, and even to women; for it was one of the grievances of Brunechildis, that Columban had interdicted even her, although queen, from crossing the threshold of the monastery. The young king went as far as the refectory, saying that he would have the entrance free to all, or that they must give up all royal gifts. Columban, with his accustomed boldness, said to the king, "If you would violate the severity of our rules, we have no need of your gifts; and if you would come here to destroy our monastery, know that your kingdom shall be destroyed with all your race."

The king was afraid and went out; but he soon replied: "You are in hopes, perhaps, that I will procure you the crown of martyrdom; but I am not fool enough for that; only, since it pleases you to live apart without having any dealings with secular people, you have but to return whence you came, even to your own country[2]."

All the nobles of the royal suite exclaimed that they would no longer tolerate in their land men who thus isolated themselves from the world. Columban replied that he would leave his monastery only when taken from it

[1] "*Episcopusque* sollicitare adgressa." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 19. This can scarcely refer to the Council called to discuss Columban's celebration of Easter, which apparently took place some years earlier. It seems more likely to refer to some efforts that were made to have his Rule condemned subsequent to the Easter controversy and after he had definitely broken with the queen on account of her connivance at the vices of her grandson—"de eius religione detrahendo et statum regulae, quam suis custodiendam monachis indederat, macularet," Ibid.

[2] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 19, *M. G. H.* p. 89.

by force. He was then taken and conducted to Besançon[1], to wait there the ultimate orders of the king. After this a sort of blockade was established around Luxeuil to prevent any one from leaving it.

The monks then recollected that they had among them a young man called Agilus, son of that Agnoald, prime minister of Gunthran[2], who, twenty years before, had obtained for Columban the gift of Luxeuil, and who afterwards intrusted his son, then a child, to the Irish abbot to be trained in monastic life. They charged Agilus with the mission of obtaining the abolition of this interdict from the king and queen. The young monk fell into the hands of a nephew of the Duke of Sequania, who, under pretence of hunting, guarded the avenues of the monastery; but by the sign of the cross, the monk made the sword fall and withered the arm that was raised to strike him, and was permitted to proceed on his way. By one of these sudden and transitory compunctions so frequent in the life of the Merovingians, Theuderic and his grandmother received the envoy of the monks with demonstrations of humility, prostrated themselves before him, raised the blockade of the monastery, and even made him costly presents.

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 19.

[2]*Vita S. Agili. Acta SS. O. S. B. II. p. 317.* Agnoald is said to be the counselor of Childebert. See Chapter XXVII, p. 112, for later work of Agilus at Rebais.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### Banished from Luxeuil

BUT their hearts were not softened with respect to Columban. He, surrounded at Besançon by the respect of all, and left at freedom in the town, took advantage of it to ascend one morning to the height of a rock, on which the citadel is now situated and which is encircled by the tortuous stream of the Doubs. From this height he surveyed the road that led to Luxeuil; he seemed to be scrutinizing the obstacles that prevented his return. His resolution was taken; he descended, left the town, and directed his steps toward his monastery[1].

At the news of his return, Theuderic and Brunechildis sent a count with a cohort of soldiers to lead him back into exile. Then ensued a scene which, during twelve centuries, and even in our own days, has been often repeated between the persecutors and their victims. The messengers of the royal will found him in the choir, chanting the Divine Office with all his community[2].

"Man of God," they said, "we pray you to obey the king's orders and ours, and to return whence you came."

"No," answered Columban, "after having left my country for the service of Jesus Christ, I cannot think that my Creator means me to return."

At these words the count withdrew, leaving the most ferocious of his soldiers to accomplish the rest. Subdued

[1]Jonas (*Vita Columbani*, I. 20) graphically describes the place and the incident. It was Sunday morning, he tells us, and Montalembert, who was well acquainted with the district, remarks that his description is "strikingly correct."

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 20. "Beatum Columbanum in ecclesia positum psallentioque ac oratione deditum cum omni congregatione fratrum repperiunt."

by the firmness of the abbot, who repeated that he would yield only to force, they threw themselves on their knees before him, weeping and entreating him to pardon them, and not to oblige them to use the violence that, on pain of their lives, they were compelled to employ. At the thought of a danger which was no longer personal to himself the intrepid Irishman yielded, and left the sanctuary which he had founded and inhabited for twenty years, but which he was never to see again[1].

His monks surrounded him with lamentations as if they were following his funeral. He consoled them by telling them that this persecution, far from being ruinous to them, would only promote the increase of "the monastic nation." They would all have followed him into exile; but a royal order forbade that consolation to any but the monks of Irish or Britannic origin. Brunechildis was anxious to free herself from these audacious and independent islanders as well as from their leader, but she had no desire to ruin the great establishment of which Burgundy was already proud. The saint, accompanied by his Celtic brethren, departed into exile[2].

The history of his journey, carefully recorded by his disciples, is full of information respecting the places and customs of Frankish Gaul. He was taken through Besançon a second time, then through Autun, Avallon,

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 20. "Vicesimo anno post incolatum heremi illius." It is evident that Jonas had in mind some outstanding event of Columban's life which had occurred twenty years before. We know with certainty that he was banished from Luxeuil in 610. In 603 Columban had in mind another outstanding event of his life which occurred over twelve years before. Are both thinking of the same event and is that the foundation of Luxeuil, which was undoubtedly the biggest event of Columban's life in Gaul?

[2]Ibid. "Quos sui ortus terra dederat, vel qui e Brittanica arva ipsum secuti fuerant." Evidently some of the Christian Celts of Britain who during the previous fifty years had been driven into the Armorican Peninsula (now Brittany) by the Saxons had joined St. Columban. Brittany is spoken of frequently by Gregory of Tours, who wrote before 590.

along the Cure and Yonne to Auxerre, and from thence to Nevers, where he embarked upon the Loire. He marked each stage of his journey by miraculous cures and other wonders, which, nevertheless, did not diminish the rancor which he had excited. On the road to Avallon, he met an equerry of King Theuderic, who attempted to pierce him with his lance. At Nevers, at the moment of embarking, a cruel hanger-on of the escort took an oar and struck Lua, one of the most pious of Columban's companions, to quicken his entrance into the boat. The saint cried, "Cruel wretch, what right have you to aggravate my trouble? How dare you strike the weary members of Christ? Remember that the divine vengence shall await you on this spot where you have struck the servant of God." And in fact, on his return, this wretch fell into the water and was drowned on the very spot where he had struck Lua[1].

Arrived at Orleans, he sent two of his brethren into the town to buy provisions; but no one would defy the royal edicts by either selling or giving them anything. They were treated as outlaws—enemies of the king, whom the Salic law forbade his subjects to receive, under the penalty (enormous in those days) of six hundred deniers. Even the churches were closed against them by the king's orders. But, in retracing their steps, they met a Syrian woman, one of that Oriental colony which came to Gaul under Childebert I. She asked them whence they came, and, on hearing, offered them hospitality and gave them all that they needed. "I am a stranger like you," she said, "and I come from the distant sun of the East." She had a blind husband, to whom Columban restored sight. The people of Orleans were touched by this inci-

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 21.

dent; but they dared testify their veneration for the exile only in secret[1].

Passing before the town of Tours, Columban begged to be permitted to pray at the tomb of the great St. Martin[2], who was equally venerated by the Celts, Romans and Franks; but his savage guardians ordered the boatmen to increase the speed of their oars, and keep in the middle of the stream. However, an invisible force stayed the boat; and directed it towards the port. The Bishop of Tours found him there, and took him to dine in his house.

At table he was asked why he was returning to his own country. He answered, "This dog of a Theuderic has hunted me from the home of my brethren."

Then one of the company[3], who was a leude or trusty vassal of the king, said, in a low voice, "Would it not be better to give men milk to drink rather than wormwood?"

"I see," answered Columban, "that you would keep your oath to King Theuderic. Well, say to your friend and your lord, that three years from this time he and his children will be destroyed, and that his whole race shall be rooted out by God."

"Why do you speak thus, servant of God?" said the leude.

"I cannot keep from uttering," answered the saint, "what God has charged me to speak[4]."

[1]Ibid.

[2]A traditional devotion to St. Martin of Tours, manifested especially in the use of Martin as a Baptismal name, still exists in Ireland. This can best be accounted for by assuming the truth of the early belief that St. Martin was an uncle or at least a very near relative of St. Patrick.

[3]Ragumundus was his name, according to Jonas.

[4]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 20. "Clotharium, quem nunc spernitis, intra triennium dominum habebitis." This prophecy was actually fulfilled in 613 according to contemporary chronicles and this places the expulsion of Columban and the journey to Nantes definitely in the year 610 A. D.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Letter from Nantes

ARRIVED at Nantes[1], and on the eve of leaving the soil of Gaul, his thoughts turned towards Luxeuil, and he wrote a letter, which begins thus:[2] "To his dearest sons, his dearest pupils, to his brethren in abstinence, to all the monks, Columban the sinner." In this he pours out his heart. Obscure, confused, passionate, interrupted by a thousand different recollections and emotions, this letter is, notwithstanding, the most complete monument of his genius and character which Columban has left to us. With these personal sentiments his concern for the present and future destiny of his beloved community of Luxeuil is always mingled. He sets forth the arrangements most likely, as he believes, to guarantee its existence, by purity of elections and internal harmony. He seems even to foresee the immense development of monastic colonies which was to proceed from Luxeuil, in a passage where he says, "Wherever sites are suitable, wherever God will build with you, go and multiply, you and the myriads of souls which shall be born of you."

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 22. There is evidence of a considerable trade between Gaul and Ireland at this time, and the harbor of Nantes seems to have been its chief center on the French coast. We may infer from Jonas (*Vita Columbani*, I. 23) that there was a regular trade route between Nantes and Ireland. "Navis quae Scottorum commercia vexerat." Besides, Theuderic evidently expected to find a boat at Nantes that would take Columban back to Ireland, and the guards who conveyed the Saint also expected to find a boat there in which he could be deported. "Ut . . . Brittanicoque sinu redderetur." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 21.

[2]This letter is edited by Wilhelm Gundlach in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Vol. III. It shows us Columban's inner soul and the noble human character of the Saint better than any other writings of his that have come down to us.

It is specially delightful to see how, in that austere and proud soul, friendship and paternal affection preserve all their rights. He recalls to mind with tender solicitude a brother who was not present at the moment of his farewell:

"Always take care," he says, "of Waldelenus, if he is still with you. May God give him everything that is good; may he become humble: and give him for me the kiss which I could not give him myself."

He exhorts his monks to confidence, spiritual strength, patience, but, above all, to peace and union. He foresees in that perpetual question about Easter a cause of division; and he desires that those who would disturb the peace of the house should be dismissed from it[1]. Confessions, counsels, and exhortations crowd upon his pen. He sometimes addresses the whole community, sometimes a monk called Athala, whom he had named as his successor.

"Thou knowest, my well-beloved Athala, how little advantage it is to form only one body if there is not also one heart. . . . As for me, my soul is rent asunder. I have desired to serve everybody, I have trusted everybody, and it has driven me almost mad[2]. Be thou wiser than I: I would not see thee taking up the burden under which I have struggled. To bind all in the enclosure of the Rule, I have attempted to attach again to the root of our tree all those branches whose frailty had separated them from mine. . . . However, thou art already better acquainted with it than I. Thou wilt know how to adapt its precepts to each[3]. Thou wilt take into ac-

[1] "Timeo enim ne et illic propter Pascha sit discordia." The Paschal question might have already caused discord in Columban's monastic family had not his own powerful personality disarmed opposition.

[2] It was not an easy matter to make saints of even the best of those wild races who went to Columban's monastery in quest of higher things.

[3] Columban himself was evidently beginning to understand the necessity for some exceptions to the rigor of his Rule. The traditions of Bangor were too severe for the men of Gaul.

count the great diversity of character among men. Thou wilt then diversify thyself, thou wilt multiply thyself for the good of those who shall obey thee with faith and love, and yet must still fear lest that very love should become for thee a danger. But what is this that I do? Behold how I persuade thee to undertake the immense labor from which I myself have stolen away!"

Further on, grief carries him away, and bursts forth only to yield immediately to invincible courage: and the recollections of classic antiquity mingle with evangelical instructions to dictate to our Irishman some of the finest and proudest words that Christian genius has ever produced[1].

"I had at first meant to write thee a letter of sorrow and tears, but knowing well that thy heart is overwhelmed with cares and labors, I have changed my style, I have sought to dry thy tears rather than to call them forth. I have permitted only gentleness to be seen outside, and chained down grief in the depths of my soul. But my own tears begin to flow! I must drive them back; for it does not become a good soldier to weep in the hour of the battle. After all, this that has happened to us is nothing new. Is it not what we have preached every day? Was there not of old a philosopher wiser than the others, who was thrown into prison for maintaining, against the opinion of all, that there was but one God? The Gospels also are full of all that is necessary to encourage us. They were written for that purpose, to teach the true disciples of Christ crucified to follow Him, bearing their cross. Our perils are many: the struggle which threatens us is severe, and the enemy terrible; but the recompense is glorious, and the freedom

[1] *Epistola IV*, *M. G. H.* III, p. 167-8. "En promuntur lacrimae." We can imagine how those tell-tale tears stained the parchment on which he wrote and forced him to admit the sorrow that was in his heart.

of our choice is manifest. Without adversaries, no conflict; and without conflict, no crown. Where the struggle is, there is courage, vigilance, fervor, patience, fidelity, wisdom, firmness, prudence: out of the fight, misery and disaster. Thus, then, without war, no crown! And I add, without freedom, no honor!"

However, he had to come to a conclusion and knew not how to do it; for he always begins again, and often repeats himself. But others interrupted and put an end to the outpouring of his heart.

"While I write," says he, "they come to tell me that the ship is ready—the ship which is to carry me back against my will to my country. . . . The end of my parchment obliges me to finish my letter. Love is not orderly: it is this which has made it confused. I would have abridged everything that I might say everything; I have not succeeded. Good-bye, dear hearts; pray for me that I may live in God."

## CHAPTER X

### Missionary Labors by the Rhine

THE bishop and count of Nantes hastened the departure; but the Irish vessel in which the property and companions of Columban were embarked, and to which he was to go in a boat, being then at the mouth of the Loire, was cast back by the waves, and remained three days ashore upon the beach. Then the captain landed the monks and all that belonged to them, and continued his voyage. Columban was permitted to go where he would[1].

He directed his steps towards the court of the King of Soissons and Neustria, Clothaire II, who, after a disastrous war with the kings of Austrasia and Burgundy, had been despoiled of the greater part of Neustria, and reduced to the possession of twelve counties between the right bank of the Seine and the Channel[2]. This son of Fredegunde, faithful to his mother's hatred for Brunechildis and her family, gave a cordial reception to the victim of his enemy, endeavored to retain him in his court, received with a good grace the remonstrances which the undaunted apostle, always faithful to his part of public censor, addressed to him upon the disorders of his court, and promised amendment. He consulted Columban about the quarrel which had broken out between the two brothers, Theudebert and Theuderic, both of whom asked his assistance. Columban advised him

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 23.

[2]Theuderic consequently ruled as far as Nantes, which explains the inhospitable attitude of the people and nobles towards Columban. At the first opportunity now he leaves Theuderic's kingdom and hastens to leave Gaul by the northeast, crossing Neustria and Austrasia to the banks of the Rhine.

to have nothing to do with it, since in three years both their kingdoms would fall into his power[1].

He afterwards asked an escort to conduct him to Theudebert, king of Metz, or Austrasia, whose states he desired to cross on his way to Italy. Passing through Paris, Meaux, and Champagne, the chiefs of the Frank nobility brought their children to him, and he blessed many, destined as will be seen, to inherit his spirit and extend his work[2]. Theudebert, now at war with his brother Theuderic, gave the exiled abbot the same reception as Clothaire II had given, but was equally unsuccessful in retaining him.

At the court of the king of Austrasia, which was not far from Burgundy, he had the consolation of seeing several of his brethren of Luxeuil, who had escaped to rejoin him[3]. At their head, and encouraged by the promises and eager protection of Theudebert, he made up his mind to preach the faith among the still pagan nations who were subject to the Austrasian government, and inhabited the countries about the Rhine. This had always been his ambition, his inclination, and the work he preferred. After twenty years of labor devoted to the reform of kings and nations already Christian, he began the third phase of his life—that of preaching to the infidels[4].

He consequently embarked upon the Rhine[5], below

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 24. To Clothaire again he renewed his prophecy of the defeat of Theuderic within three years.

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 26. For the fruits of this blessing see Chapters XXVII and XXVIII.

[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 27. Some of these brethren accompanied him to Switzerland; for instance, Athala and Chagnoald.

[4]Cf. Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 4; Ibid. I. 6, from which it seems to have been the constant wish of Columban to preach the Gospel to people other than the Franks.

[5]During this trip on the Rhine the saint probably wrote the *Carmen Navale* or boat song which has come down to us under his name. It is based on an ancient German boat song which has also been preserved. Cf. Metlake, *Life of St. Columban,* p. 172. The manuscript of the original was discovered in a Berlin manuscript immediately preceding the Epistle to Fidolius, and the *Carmen Navale* itself in a Munich manuscript. The weight of evidence is in favor of its Columban origin.

Mayence, and ascending this river and its tributaries as far as the Lake of Zurich, remained for some time at Tuggen, and at Arbon[1], finding here and there some traces of Christianity sown under the Roman or Frank government. He established himself finally at Bregenz[2], upon the shores of Lake Constance, amid the ruins of an ancient Roman town. The Suevi and Alemanni, subject to the Franks since the victory of Clovis at Tolbiac[3], then occupied all Eastern Helvetia. These, together with the peoples dwelling between the Aar, the Alps, and the Lech, were idolaters, worshippers of the god Wodin, and of violent and cruel disposition. In announcing the Gospel to them, Columban displayed all the impetuosity of his temper, which age had not lessened[4].

His principal assistant was another Irishman named Gall[5], who was not less daring than himself, but who was well educated, and had the gift of preaching in the German language as well as in Latin[6]. Sometimes they

[1]Tuggen and Arbon are now on the tourist routes in Switzerland.

[2]Bregenz. The Cistercian monastery of Mehrerau arose afterwards on the site of the chapel of St. Aurelia, the foundation of St. Columban's mission at Bregenz. In 1734 this abbey received from the Holy See the privilege of celebrating the Feast of St. Columban as a double of the first class with octave, together with a plenary indulgence for all who visit the abbey church during the feast.

[3]The Battle of Zülpich, A. D. 496, at which Clovis made a vow to embrace the faith of his Catholic wife Clothilda if he were granted victory. After the battle he with three thousand of his soldiers and their families were baptized by St. Remigius, Bishop of Rheims.

[4]Columban at this time must have been over eighty years of age.

[5]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 27, *Op. Cit.* p. 102. The Life of St. Gall has been edited by Bruno Krusch in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Vol. IV. There are three "Lives" extant, a very old original and two others based on it. The *Vita Galli Vetustissima* is only a fragment, but dates from A. D. 745. Wettinus, a monk of Reichenau, the author of the second *Vita*, died in 824 and the last and most complete was written by Walahfridus Strabo, Abbot of Reichenau, in the second quarter of the ninth century.

[6]*Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal. I. 6, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 289. "Ut non solum Latinae, sed etiam barbaricae locutionis cognitionem non parvam haberet." Gall was evidently a better linguist than Columban. He had learned the language of the Alemannians and compiled a vocabulary which is still extant.

broke the boilers in which the pagans prepared beer to offer as a sacrifice to Wodin; sometimes they burned the temples, and threw into the lake the gilded idols whom the inhabitants showed them as the tutelary gods of their country. Such proceedings naturally excited against them the fury of the natives, and exposed them to great dangers. They had to flee to Zug, from which they were expelled with blows. At Bregenz they had more success, and made some conversions, but without appeasing the rage, or winning the affection of the mass of the people.

The little colony, however, remained there for three years. They resumed monastic life. They had at first to contend against hunger; for the inhabitants would give them nothing. They had to live upon the wild birds, which came to them like the manna to the children of Israel[1], or upon woodland fruits which they had to dispute with the beasts of the forests. But they had soon a garden of vegetables and fruit-trees. Fishing was also a resource; Columban himself made the nets; Gall, the learned and eloquent preacher, threw them into the lake, and had considerable draughts[2]. One night, while he watched in silence in his boat among his nets, he heard the demon of the mountain call to the demon of the waters.

"Here I am," answered the latter.

"Arise then," said the first, "and help me to chase away the strangers who have expelled me from my temple; it will require us both to drive them away."

"What good should we do?" answered the demon of the waters; "here is one of them upon the waterside whose nets I have tried to break, but I have never succeeded. He prays continually, and never sleeps. It will be labor in vain; we shall make nothing of it."

[1] "Evenit tanta copia alitum." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 27.
[2] *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal. I. 6, p. 289.

Then Gall made the sign of the cross, and said to them: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave these regions without daring to injure any one."

Then he hastened to land and awoke the abbot, who immediately rang the bell for nocturnal service; but before the first psalm had been intoned, they heard the yells of the demons echoing from the tops of the surrounding hills, at first with fury, then losing themselves in the distance, and dying away like the confused voices of a routed army[1].

To this fine legend, which depicts so well all that could move the soul of these intrepid missionaries upon a coast so long inhospitable, we must add the vision which deterred Columban from undertaking a still more distant and difficult mission[2]. He was pursued by the thought of bearing the light of the Gospel among the Slav nations, and especially among the Wendes, whose country extended into the midst of the Germanic races, and to the south of the Danube. Like St. Patrick, the remembrance of the nations who knew not Christ pursued him into his sleep.

One night he saw in a dream an angel, who said to him:

"The world is before thee; take the right hand or the left hand, but turn not aside from thy road, if thou wouldst eat the fruit of thy labors."

He interpreted this vision into a sign that he should have no success in the enterprise of which he dreamed, and accordingly abandoned it[3].

The Slavs formed, as is well known, with the Celts and Germans, the third of the great races which occupied Central Europe. If Columban, a Celt by origin and education, but a monk and missionary for almost all his life

[1]Op. Cit. I. 7, p. 290.
[2]*Op. Cit.* I. 8; *M. G. H.* IV, pp. 290-291.
[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 27; *M. G. H.* IV, p. 104.

among the Germans, had entered the countries already invaded by Slavonic tribes, his influence would have been brought to bear upon all the families of nations who have predominated in modern Christendom. This glory was denied to him. It was enough for him to have been one of the most illustrious of those intermediary agents who have labored under the impulse of Christianity for the fusion of the two greatest races of the West[1].

[1]The Celts and the Teutons.

## CHAPTER XI

### A Mission of Peace

DURING this sojourn at Bregenz, our saint went, it is not known on what occasion, to see King Theudebert, who was still at war with his brother, the King of Burgundy[1]. Enlightened by a presentiment, and inspired by gratitude to this young prince, he counseled him to yield and take refuge in the bosom of the Church, by becoming a monk, instead of risking at once his kingdom and his salvation[2]. Theudebert had, besides, great need of expiating his sins: very profligate, like all the Merovingians, he had just killed Queen Blidhilda, a young slave whom his grandmother Brunechildis had made him marry in his youth, in order to be able to take another wife.

The advice of Columban caused great laughter to the king and all the Franks who surrounded him.

"Such a thing has never been heard of," said they, "as that a Frankish king should become a monk of his own free will."

"Well," said Columban, in the middle of their exclamations, "if he will not be a monk of his own free will, he will be one by force."

Saying this, the saint returned to his cell on the banks of Lake Constance. He learned soon after that his persecutor, Theuderic, had again invaded the states of his protector Theudebert, and had routed and pursued the latter to the gates of Cologne. The decisive battle between the two brothers took place on the plains of Tol-

[1]This struggle was ended with the defeat of Theudebert at the second Battle of Tolbiac, May, 612 A. D. (Fredegar, IV. 38).

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 28; Fredegar IV. 38.

biac, where their great-grandfather Clovis had founded, by victory, the Christian kingdom of the Franks. Theudebert was vanquished and taken. Theuderic sent him to the implacable Brunechildis, who had long disowned him as her grandson, and who, still furious at her expulsion from the kingdom of Austrasia, had his head shaved, made him assume the monastic dress, and shortly after put him to death[1].

At the time when the second battle of Tolbiac was going on, Columban was wandering in a wood near his retreat with his favorite disciple Chagnoald, a young and noble Frank, son of one of the principal lords of Theudebert, whom he had brought with him from the neighborhood of Meaux[2]. As he was reading, seated upon the fallen trunk of an old oak, he slept, and saw in a dream the two brothers coming to blows. At his waking he told his companion of this vision, sighing over all that bloodshed.

The son of Theudebert's minister answered him,

"But dear father, help Theudebert with your prayers, that he may overcome Theuderic, your common enemy."

Columban answered him,

"Thou givest me a foolish counsel; not such was the will of our Lord, Who commands us to pray for our enemies"[3].

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 28; Fredegar IV. 42.

[2]Chagnoald, afterwards Bishop of Laon, the son of Chagneric of Meaux, a brother of Burgundofara. See Chapter XXVIII.

[3]Jonas adds: "This companion (Chagnoald) afterwards made inquiries as to the day and hour and found that it was exactly as had been revealed to the man of God." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 28.

## CHAPTER XII

### His Last Pilgrimage

HOWEVER, the whole of Austrasia had fallen by the death of Theudebert into the hands of Brunechildis and Theuderic, and the banks of the upper Rhine, where their victim had found a refuge, was a dependency of the Austrasian kingdom[1]. Besides, the inhabitants of the environs of Bregenz, always irritated by the violent destruction of their idols, complained to the duke of the province that these strangers scared the game of the royal chase, by infesting the forests with their presence. Their cows were stolen, and two of the monks were even slain in an ambuscade.

It was necessary to depart.

Columban said, "We have found a golden cup, but it is full of serpents. The God whom we serve will lead us elsewhere[2]."

He had long desired to go to Italy, and reckoned on a good reception from the king of the Lombards. At the moment of departure, the fiery Gall, seized with fever, asked leave to remain.

Columban was irritated by this weakness.

"Ah, my brother," said he, "art thou already disgusted with the labors I have made thee endure? But since

[1]The royal family of Burgundy had moved their court to Metz, the capital of the former Austrasian kingdom. This was in the summer of 612, which we may fix as the date when Columban began his journey over the Alps. See Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 29; also *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal. I. 15 and I. 22 for the presence of the boy king, Sigibert, son of Theuderic, at Metz. Before the end of the year Theuderic died, which left his kingdom in the hands of Sigibert, a boy of ten, and his great-grandmother as queen regent.

[2]*Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal. I. 8, *Op. Cit.* p. 291.

thou wilt separate thyself from me I debar thee, as long as I live, from saying Mass."

Poor Gall did not deserve these reproaches; he remained in Helvetia, as will be seen, only to redouble the zeal of his apostolic labors, and to found there one of the most celebrated monasteries in Christendom[1].

Columban kept with him only a single disciple, Athala[2], and, notwithstanding, pursued his journey across the Alps[3]. When we picture to ourselves the fatigues and dangers of such an undertaking in the days of Columban, we imagine that it was the image and recollection of this journey which inspired the beginning of one of the instructions addressed to his monks, in which the unwearied traveler compares life to an uncertain road.

"Oh mortal life! how many hast thou deceived, seduced, and blinded! Thou fliest and art nothing; thou appearest and art but a shade; thou risest and art but a vapor; thou fliest every day, and every day thou comest; thou fliest in coming, and comest in flying, the same at the point of departure, different at the end; sweet to the

[1] *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal. I. 9, *Op. Cit.* p. 291. The *Vita Galli Vetustissima* also refers to an absolution from this excommunication given by St. Columban on his deathbed. This, the oldest of the *Vitae Galli* was probably written in A. D. 745 after the translation of St. Gall's relics to a new shrine mentioned in a charter dated 744. See Clark, *Abbey of St. Gall*, p. 4; also Bruno Krusch, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 230. There was evidently a tradition in regard to this penance imposed by St. Columban on St. Gall which Walahfrid considered sufficiently trustworthy to incorporate in his *Vita Galli*, written at the request of Abbot Gozbert, of St. Gall, 816-836. Clark, *Op. Cit.* p. 7.

[2] Athala, as Jonas calls him, was Columban's successor as Abbot of Bobbio. Columban probably took a few other monks with him also. Sigisbert, his Irish companion, parted with him at Chur and founded what afterwards became the famous monastery of Disentis which still exists. St. Ursanne also left him at this time or perhaps immediately after returning from Nantes.

[3] Columban and his companions crossed the Alps undoubtedly by the Septimer Pass. It was the shortest route from Bregenz to Italy and the most frequented.

foolish, bitter to the wise; those who love thee know thee not, and those only know thee who despise thee.

"What art thou, then, O human life? Thou art the way of mortals and not their life; thou beginnest in sin and endest in death. Thou art then the way of life and not life itself. Thou art only a road, and an unequal road, long for some, short for others; wide for these, narrow for those; joyous for some, sad for others, but for all equally rapid and without return. It is necessary, then, O miserable human life! to fathom thee, to question thee, but not to trust in thee. We must traverse thee without dwelling in thee—no one dwells upon a great road: we but march on through it, to reach the country beyond"[1].

The king of the Lombards was Agilulf; his wife was Theudelinda, the noble rival of Clothilda. He received the venerable exile with respect and confidence; and Columban had scarcely arrived in Milan when he immediately began to write against the Arians[2], for this fatal heresy still predominated among the Lombards; those who had not remained pagan, especially among the nobles, had fallen victims to Arianism. The Irish apostle thus found a new occupation for his missionary zeal, which he could pursue successfully without giving up his love for solitude.

Agilulf bestowed upon him a territory called Bobbio[3], situated in a secluded gorge of the Apennines, between Genoa and Milan, not far from the famous shores of the Trebbia, where Hannibal encamped and vanquished the Romans. An old church, dedicated to St. Peter, was in

[1] *Instructio V*, Migne, Vol. 80, p. 259. This document is not admitted as genuine by Seebass who has made a close study of the Columban Homilies. *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XIII, 1893.

[2] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 30, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 107. Columban's writings against the Arians have been lost.

[3] Ibid.

existence there. Columban undertook to restore it and to add to it a monastery. Despite his age[1], he shared in the workmen's labors, and bent his old shoulders under the weight of enormous beams of fir-wood, which it seemed impossible to transport across the precipices and perpendicular paths of these mountains. This abbey of Bobbio was his last stage. He made it the citadel of orthodoxy against the Arians, and lighted there a focus of knowledge and instruction which was long afterwards the light of northern Italy[2].

There, as everywhere, and throughout all his life, our saint continued to cultivate those literary studies that had charmed his youth. At seventy-two[3] he addressed to a friend an epistle in Adonic verse, which everywhere bears the impression of those classic recollections which the monks of that period cultivated[4]. He prays him not to despise "these little verses by which Sappho, the illustrious muse, loved to charm her contemporaries, and to prefer for a moment these frivolous trifles to the most learned productions." He appeals to the recollections of

[1]Probably in 614 A. D. Columban was eighty-four at the time. Jonas bears witness to a tradition that the labor expended by Columban in dragging the heavy beams from the mountain-side to build the church at Bobbio was regarded as miraculous. We can not argue anything from this about Columban's age because the difficulties which he overcame according to Jonas would have been marvelous even in a much younger man.

[2]Most of the manuscripts of the famous Bobbio library have found their way to Rome, Turin and Milan. The Ambrosian Library at Milan is especially rich in Bobbio treasures. Some of the oldest and most valuable documents that have preserved for us the learning of ancient times have come through this channel, for example, the important Muratorian Fragment, the earliest extant list of the Books of the New Testament, as well as many of the treasures of the ancient classics.

[3]We prefer to follow Bruno Krusch, who is inclined to think that Columban was eighty-six when he died. We are justified in attaching great importance to the opinions of a man like Krusch because his study of the Columban manuscripts must have given him a background for his views which is not necessarily evident in his published work.

[4]The Epistle, *Columbanus Fidolio Fratri Suo*, found in *Codex Berolinensis*, eighth century, has been published by Gundlach, *M. G. H.* III, p. 186.

the Golden Fleece, of the judgment of Paris, of Danae's shower of gold, and of the collar of Amphiaraus.

Then his thoughts grew sober as they rose. "Thus I wrote, overwhelmed by the cruel pains of my weak body, and by age, for while the times hasten their course, I approach the eighteenth olympiad of my life. Everything passes, and the irreparable days fly away. Live, be strong, be happy, and remind yourself of sad old age."[1]

[1] "Nam dum precipiti labuntur tempora cursu
Nunc ad olympiadis ter senos venimus annos."

*Epistle* X, Gundlach Ed. ll. 162-3. Bruno Krusch and Mabillon before him accept olympiad in the Latin sense of lustrum or a five-year period, which would make Columban about eighty-five at this time.

The existence of the letter, apart from his other writings, in a Berlin manuscript, would seem to indicate that it might have been addressed to a friend of Columban at the German side of the Alps, and the existence of the German boat song which Columban used, in the same manuscript, strengthens this view. It would consequently have been written from Bobbio and the Bobbio usage seems to have accepted olympiad as the equivalent of lustrum, five years instead of four as the Greeks reckoned. Moran, *Early Irish Church*, p. 251. Columban might be expected also to be more familiar with the Latin computation than that of the Greeks. Ausonius (XXII. 4.6.) and other Latin poets follow the same usage.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Letter to Pope Boniface

TO THIS last period of his life also belongs that letter, so differently interpreted, which Columban wrote to Pope Boniface IV[1] in the name of King Agilulf. The King had scarcely escaped from the bonds of Arianism, when he unluckily undertook to protect the partisans of the Three Chapters[2], who called in question the orthodoxy of the Holy See, which, according to their view, had placed itself in opposition to a General Council. Columban wrote from the midst of a mixed population of orthodox and schismatics, of heretics and even of pagans.

Evidently little acquainted in his own person with the point at issue, he made himself the organ of the restlessness and defiant spirit of the party which claimed to be the only one faithful to the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon against the error of Eutyches. While he appeals, in a series of extravagant and obscure apostrophes, to the indulgence of the Pope for a foolish Scot, charged to write on account of a Lombard, a king of the Gentiles, he acquaints the pontiff with the imputations brought against him, and entreats him to prove his orthodoxy and excommunicate his detractors. Doubtless some of the expressions which he employs would be now regarded as disrespectful and justly rejected. But in these young and vigorous times, faith and austerity could be more indulgent.

[1]The letter to Pope St. Boniface is edited by Gundlach, *M. G. H.* III, p. 170.

[2]The name given to the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibas and Theodoret. Metlake, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 204; also II, Chap. I, p. 155.

If his letter is impressed with all the frankness and independence of the Celt, and "a little too biting," as he says himself, it breathes also the tender and filial devotion of a Roman, impassioned in his anxiety for the honor of the Holy See.

Let it be judged by this fragment: "I confess that I lament over the evil reputation of the chair of St. Peter in this country. I speak to you not as a stranger, but as a disciple, as a friend, as a servant. I speak freely to our masters, to the pilots of the vessel of the Church, and I say to them, Watch! and despise not the humble advice of the stranger.

"We Irish, who inhabit the extremities of the world, are the disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of the other apostles who have written under dictation of the Holy Spirit. We receive nothing more than the apostolic and evangelical doctrine. There has never been either a heretic, a Jew, or a schismatic among us. The people whom I see here, who bear the burden of many heretics, are jealous; they disturb themselves like a frightened flock. Pardon me then, if, swimming among these rocks, I have said some words offensive to pious ears. The native liberty of my race has given me that boldness. With us it is not the person, it is the right which prevails. The love of evangelical peace makes me say everything.

"We are bound to the chair of St. Peter; for however great and glorious Rome may be, it is this chair which makes her great and glorious among us. Although the name of the ancient city, the glory of Ausonia, had been spread throughout the world as something supremely august, by the too great admiration of the nations, for us you are only august and great since the incarnation of God, since the Spirit of God has breathed upon us, and since the Son of God, in his car drawn by these two

ardent coursers of God, Peter and Paul, has crossed the oceans of nations to come to us. Still more, because of the two great apostles of Christ, you are almost celestial, and Rome is the head of the churches of the whole world, excepting only the prerogative of the place of the divine resurrection[1]."

The generous fervor of that Irish race, justly proud of having never known the yoke of pagan Rome, and of having waited, before recognizing her supremacy, till she had become the Rome of the apostles and martyrs, has never been expressed with more poetic energy.

[1]The letter is at once a striking manifestation of Columban's fearless independence of spirit and at the same time his deep devotion and loyalty to the Holy See.

## CHAPTER XIV

### His Last Days at Bobbio

BUT whilst the unwearied missionary had thus recommenced in Italy his career as a preacher and monastic founder, everything was changed among the Franks to whom he had devoted the half of his life. At the moment when the victorious persecutor of Columban seemed at the climax of his fortune, when he had joined the immense domains of the Austrasian kingdom to his own kingdom of Orleans and Burgundy, and when he had only the little state of Clothaire left to conquer, in order to reign over all Gaul and Frankish Germany, King Theuderic suddenly died at the age of twenty-six[1].

In vain did Brunechildis essay to renew her reign in the name of her great-grandson, the young Sigibert, the eldest of Theuderic's children: the lords of Austrasia, who could never tolerate her haughty rule, and first among them the powerful chief Pepin[2], from whom the Carlovingian race proceeded, declared themselves against her. They leagued themselves on one side with the lords of Burgundy, on the other with Clothaire and his Neustrians, and called the latter to reign over them. Brunechildis and the four sons of Theuderic were deliv-

[1]A. D. 612. Sigibert, the boy king who succeeded Theuderic, was slain the following year by Clothaire, and Brunechildis was also tortured and put to death. Of the remaining three children of Theuderic, one was slain, another fled, and the third, for whom Clothaire was godfather, was spared but degraded from his rank. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Columban. Fredegar, *Chronicle IV*, 38-43; Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 29; Sisebutus, *Vita Desiderii*, XIX. 21.

[2]Pepin of Landen, Mayor of the Merovingian palace, 624-639, during which he laid the foundation of that power which afterwards resulted in the Carlovingian dynasty a century later. See *History of the Christian Era*, Guggenberger, Vol. I, p. 116.

ered up to him. He slaughtered the two eldest and showed himself the worthy son of Fredegunde by the atrocious sufferings which he inflicted upon her septuagenarian rival.

Clothaire II, when he had become, by all these crimes, the sole king of the Franks and master of Austrasia and Burgundy as well as Neustria, remembered the prediction of Columban, and desired to see once more the saint who had prophesied so truly. He charged Eustace, who had succeeded him as abbot at Luxeuil, to go and seek his spiritual father, and sent with him a deputation of nobles, as a warrant for the good intentions of the king[1].

Columban received Eustace gladly, and kept his visitor with him for some time that he might make him thoroughly acquainted with the spirit of the Rule which he was to establish among the "monastic nation" at Luxeuil. But he declined to answer the call of Clothaire: we would fain believe that all the innocent blood which that king had spilt had something to do with his refusal; but there is nothing to prove it. The abbot confined himself to writing him a letter full of good advice, which, it must be allowed, he had great need of, and recommending to him his beloved abbey of Luxeuil, which Clothaire indeed overwhelmed with gifts and favors.

As for Columban, he ended as he had begun, by seeking a solitude still more complete than that of the monastery which he had founded at Bobbio. He had found upon the opposite shore of the Trebbia, in the side of a great rock, a cavern, which he transformed into a chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin[2]: there he passed

[1] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 30.

[2] *Miracula S. Columbani* Xth Century in *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, Paris, 1669, p. 40, refers to this chapel built by St. Columban in honor of the Blessed Virgin. Both St. Gall and St. Columban, as indeed all the Irish saints and Irish people, were remarkable for their tender devotion to Our Lady. Sigisbert, another Irish monk and companion of St. Columban, when he founded what in later years became the famous Abbey of Disentis dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. Centuries have not cooled the fervor of the Irish devotion to the Mother of God.

his last days in fasting and prayer, returning to the monastery only for Sundays and holidays[1]. After his death[2] this chapel was long venerated and much frequented by afflicted souls; and three centuries later, the annals of the monastery record that those who had entered there sad and downcast had left it rejoicing, consoled by the sweet protection of Mary and of Columban.

Such was the life of the illustrious founder of Luxeuil; less forgotten, we are bound to say, than others as worthy of recollection as himself, his memory has been brought to light anew in our own days, only to be made use of in a spirit hostile to the truth and authority of the Holy See[3].

What, then, is there in this life which can justify the assumption which has attempted to raise the founder of Luxeuil into the chief of a political party, an enemy to royalty in his time, and, more than that, a schismatic, a contemner, or at least a rival, of the Papacy? Columban had neither the virtues nor the vices which make political men: he contended, not against royalty, but against a single king, and he waged this warfare solely in defense of the purity and dignity of Christian marriage.

[1]This grotto is still pointed out in the mountain side near Bobbio. Italian mothers even today climb to it and place their children when they are sick upon the spot hallowed by the penance of the saint.

[2]The date of Columban's death has been ascertained with certainty as November 23rd, 615. See MacCarthy, article on the "Death of St. Columbanus," *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 1884; also Mrs. Concannon's synopsis of Dr. MacCarthy's research, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 281.

[3]With the recrudescence of Gallicanism in France during the early part of the last century, its exponents grasped at everything they could lay hands on to strengthen their position in their revolt against the authority of the Pope. The letters of St. Columban were alleged to indicate an independent attitude of those far-off days, but the quotation in the preceding chapter is in itself sufficient to disprove this contention. It was convincingly answered by Montalembert and those who stood with him for the defense of the authority of the Holy See, and the position of St. Columban was completely vindicated. See Metlake, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 215.

It is impossible to discover in his biography, so full of minute details, the least trace of a political tendency. Far from being an enemy to royalty, he was, without doubt, of all the great monks of his time the one who had the most frequent and cordial intercourse with contemporary kings: with Clothaire, king of the Neustrians; Theudebert, king of the Austrasians; Agilulf, king of the Lombards. But he knew that virtue and truth are for kings as well as for nations. History should admire in him monastic integrity struggling with the retrograde paganism of Merovingian polygamy, and the foreign missionary and solitary promptly asserting, in the presence of the conquerors of Gaul, the freedom of the prophets of the ancient law against the crowned profligate; "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." This was what happened and nothing else; this is sufficient for his glory.

In respect to the Holy See, if some traces of the daring independence of his race and the frank boldness of his character are to be found in his language—if he must be blamed for defending and imposing on others, with wearisome obstinacy, the local and special observances of his own country—if he made himself singular by offering advice to Pope Boniface IV on a theological question, which he himself confesses he had not studied —it must be added that, even in his most vehement words, nothing implied the slightest doubt of the supreme authority of the Roman See[1].

He says expressly that the pillar of the Church stands

[1]Columban's zeal and natural impetuosity of character and the freedom and independent spirit of his race led him sometimes into extravagances of expression, but can we not excuse him when we remember that it was to the same impetuosity of character, inflamed with the love of Christ and His Church, that western Europe owes its civilization and faith? Columban lived in days very different from ours and we must judge him in the light of those days, not in that of our own times when there is more diplomacy and less courage of conviction.

always firm at Rome; he expressly entitles the Pope *the pastor of pastors,* and *the prince of the chiefs*[1], whose duty it is to protect the army of the Lord in its perils, to organize everything, to regulate the order of war, to stimulate the captains, and, finally, to engage in the combat, marching himself at the head of the soldiers of God[2].

[1]See McNaught, *The Celtic Church and the See of Peter,* in which a Scotch Presbyterian minister quotes St. Columban to show the close relations that existed between the Holy See and the early Celtic Church in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

[2]The Irish monks loved to regard themselves as soldiers of Christ. We find the idea frequently running through their ascetical works that have come down to us.

## CHAPTER XV

### His Rule and Penitential

COLUMBAN was never the enemy of either kings or bishops. He was a formidable rival only to St. Benedict, though neither in his writings nor his life is there anything to indicate that this rivalry was intentional; it sprang naturally from his independent mind, strongly individual and even eccentric, from the passionate attachment with which he inspired so large a number of disciples, from the missionary impulse which he evidently possessed, but above all from the Rule which he believed it his duty to write for the use of the "monastic nation" which he had collected under his crosier[1].

He never mentions the Rule of St. Benedict, though it was impossible that he could be ignorant of its existence, especially after he had gone to Lombardy. But he desired to introduce into Gaul a durable monument of the religious spirit of his country, of that powerful impulse which had fertilized monastic Ireland, and formed those immense collections of monks where such a discipline reigned that as many as a thousand abbots recognized the laws of a single superior, and such a union that, in certain houses, since their first foundation, there had never been a single dispute[2].

[1]Columban brought to Gaul the monastic tradition of his own country, especially the tradition of Bangor where he made his novitiate. It was a tradition of stern discipline and asceticism far too difficult for our soft days.

[2]*Regula S. Columbani*, Chapter VII, Seebass. This seems to be an extravagant claim, but we must remember that Ireland did not easily get its title of "the island of saints and scholars." Bangor had three thousand monks and Clonard quite as many, and mission houses were founded by their spiritual children who prescribed the rule and tradition of the mother house, as Columban did at Luxeuil and Bobbio. The word "abbates" used by St. Columban may, however, mean nothing more than "fathers" or "priests."

This Rule, at once shorter, less distinct, and more severe than that of St. Benedict[1], agrees with it, notwithstanding, in its essential particulars, as the Benedictine Rule approaches, in many points, to the rules of the great solitaries of the East[2]. It is not given to man, not even to the man of genius, to isolate himself from the efforts and experience of his predecessors, and no truly practical genius has attempted or even desired it.

The first of the ten chapters which form the Rule of St. Columban treats of obedience; it was to be absolute and passive; there is no reservation, as in that of St. Benedict, of a judicious exercise of power on the part of the abbot, nor of the advisers by whom he was to be surrounded. The second imposes perpetual silence upon the monks, except for useful or necessary causes. The third reduces their food to the lowest rations possible: Benedict had granted meat to the weak and ailing, and a pint of wine; Columban allowed only pulse, meal moistened with water, and a small loaf to all alike. They were to eat only in the evening; fasting was to be a daily exercise, like work, prayer, or reading.

Except Chapter VII, which establishes a very complicated and tediously prolonged order of services for the psalmody of the choir (seventy-five psalms and twenty-five anthems for the great feasts, thirty-six psalms and twelve anthems for the lesser), the other chapters treat of poverty, humility, chastity, discretion or prudence, and mortification, all virtues essential to the monastic condition, but which the author deals with rather as a preacher than a legislator.

[1]*The Rule of St. Benedict*, edited by Dom Oswald H. Blair with English translation. The Rule of St. Columban has been edited by Otto Seebass with German introduction in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 1893-1896.

[2]All forms of monasticism have necessarily the essential features of the cenobitical life in common.

The tenth, and last, which is as long as all the others put together, forms, under the title of "Penitential," a sort of criminal code[1], in which a new contrast may be remarked with the Benedictine code, in the extreme severity of the penalties prescribed for the least irregularities. The rigid discipline used in the monasteries of Scotland and Ireland is here manifested by the excessive use of the discipline, which is reserved in the Benedictine code for incorrigible delinquents, and prescribed in the Penitential for the most insignificant omissions. The number of strokes inflicted on delinquents varied from six to two hundred[2].

This penalty, however, must have appeared much less hard and less humiliating at that period, even to the sons of the great, of whom so large a number were reckoned among the disciples of Columban, than it would seem to the most obscure Christian of our own time, since the maximum of two hundred blows was regarded as the equivalent of two days' fasting on bread and water[3].

These severities discouraged no one. Columban saw an army of disciples collect around him in the sanc-

[1]Montalembert's division of the Rule of St. Columban is not quite correct. Little criticism had been done on the original text when he wrote. This has since been done by Dr. Seebass who has divided the Rule into two distinct parts:

I. *Regula Monachorum*, consisting of ten chapters, outlines the virtues and perfection to which monks should aspire.

II. *Regula Coenobialis*, which contains fifteen chapters, goes more into detail regarding the lives and actions of members of the monastic household, attaching at the same time penalties for faults or breaches of monastic discipline.

The Penitential had nothing to do with the monastic life, but is merely a catalogue of sins indicating the penances which confessors should impose for their atonement. In other words it served as a kind of moral theology for confessors. See II, Chapter I, p. 146.

[2]This form of self-inflicted punishment known as the discipline is a means of mortification practiced in every age.

[3]The character of the men Columban gathered under his roof at Luxeuil, drawn as they were from a semi-barbarous race, needed strict discipline to mould them into saints. By such means he renewed the foundations of Christianity in Europe.

tuaries which he had founded, up to the last day of his life. They were more numerous and more illustrious than those of Benedict. Inspired by the spirit of this great saint, pervaded by the vigorous life which flowed from him, like him self-willed, dauntless, and unwearied, they gave to the monastic spirit the most powerful, rapid and active impulse which it had yet received in the West[1].

They extended it especially over those regions where that Franco-Germanic race, which hid in its bosom the future life of Christian civilization, was laboriously forming itself. By their means the genius and memory of Columban hover over the whole of the seventh century, of all the centuries the most fertile and illustrious in the number and fervor of the monastic establishments which it produced. However, we shall see, before the century was completed, the Rule and institution of the great Irishman everywhere replaced by the spirit and laws of his immortal predecessor. Columban had more of that fascination which attracts for a day, or for a generation, than of that depth of genius which creates for ages.

[1]In some cases where the Rule of St. Benedict was introduced side by side with that of St. Columban, as at Jussamoutier and Solignac, the more severe parts of the Columban Rule were retained.

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Fortunes of Bobbio

LET us endeavor, then, if we can, to trace a brief picture of this monastic mission of the sons of Columban, at once so laborious and so productive, the fruits of which, if they must not be exclusively attributed to the glory or authority of the Celtic missionary, did not the less enrich for a thousand years and more the treasures of the Church.

One word, in the first place, upon the Lombard abbey where Columban completed his career. His successor was Athala, a noble Burgundian. He had first been a monk at Lérins, but, repelled by the decay of that renowned sanctuary, had been drawn to Luxeuil by the fame of Columban, and was named by the latter as his successor after his expulsion from Burgundy[1]. But he preferred to join him in exile[2]. After the death of the founder, the new abbot was troubled by an insurrection of the Italian monks, who declared themselves incapable of bearing so many austerities and so hard a discipline[3]. He permitted them to go; they went to seek another resting-place, some among the neighboring mountains, some on the shores of the Mediterranean; several returned afterwards to the fold where Athala continued the work of his master, struggling bravely against Arianism, which had found its last citadel among the

[1]In Columban's letter to his brethren written from Nantes he names Athala as his successor. *Epistola S. Columbani, M. G. H.* III, p. 166; also Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, II. 1.

[2]That Athala accompanied Columban over the Alps is a tradition not mentioned by Jonas. He was succeeded by St. Eustace as Abbot of Luxeuil. Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 30.

[3]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 1.

conquering Lombards of northern Italy. He died at the foot of a crucifix which he had placed at the door of his cell that he might kiss the feet every time he went out or in, and was buried by the side of Columban[1].

Another stranger governed the monastery after him, Bertulph[2], a noble Austrasian, and near relative of the famous Arnulf, bishop of Metz, the earliest known ancestor of that Carlovingian race which was soon to unite Gaul and Italy under its laws[3]. Bertulph was born a pagan; the example of his cousin had converted him and led him to Luxeuil, from whence he followed Athala to Bobbio. He was scarcely elected when he had to struggle with the bishop of Tortona, who wished to bring the abbey under his jurisdiction and attempted to arm himself with the authority of Ariowald, king of the Lombards.

This Ariowald, son-in-law and successor of Agilulf, did not promise to be a very zealous protector of the Irish abbey. Before he became king he had met one day in the streets of Pavia one of the monks of Bobbio, charged by the abbot Athala with a mission to the capital of the Lombards. Seeing him from a distance, he said, "There is one of Columban's monks, who refuse to salute us." After which he himself saluted the monk derisively. The latter, whose name was Blidulf, answered that he would have saluted him willingly had he been

[1]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 6.

[2]A. D. 627-640. Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 23.

[3]St. Arnulf held the office of Mayor of the Palace in the reign of Theudebert of Austrasia. He was nominated Bishop of Metz by Clothaire at the request of the people in 614. Later on he became chief adviser to Dagobert, but finally resigned his see and became a monk at the Columban monastery of Remiremont, founded by his friend, St. Romaric.

St. Arnulf was married before he became bishop, and on his elevation to that dignity his wife became a nun at Triers. He had two sons. One of them married the daughter of Pepin, and their son, Pepin of Heristal, became the founder of the Carlovingian Dynasty.

irreproachable in matters of faith, and took advantage of the occasion to preach him a sermon upon the equality of the three persons of the Trinity. Ariowald, furious at this, posted two of his satellites to await the monk's return, and to beat him to death.

Blidulf, who had supped with an orthodox citizen of Pavia, was attacked in a remote place by these assassins, who beat him unmercifully, and left him on the ground for dead. At the end of some hours he was found by his host lying in his blood, but he raised himself up, despite his cruel wounds, saying that he had never slept a sweeter sleep. This wonder roused popular opinion in favor of the monks of Bobbio, and their orthodox doctrine. Ariowald, confused and penitent, sent to the abbey to ask pardon and offered gifts, which were refused. But we must believe that this adventure made a salutary impression on his soul; for after his accession to the throne, though still an Arian, he abstained not only from persecuting the orthodox monastery, but even from condemning it in its struggles with the bishop. "It is not my part," he said, "to know these priestly contentions: let them be judged by their synods."

Bertulph, however, went to Rome to appeal to Pope Honorius, made him acquainted with the Rule, and the customs followed in the new foundation, obtained his sovereign approbation, and returned furnished with a privilege which exempted from episcopal jurisdiction the monastery in which Columban had finished his course[1].

[1]June 11th, 628. Bruno Krusch gives the details and authorities for this exemption in his Introduction to *V. Col. M. G. H.* IV, p. 25. Columban had struggled for exemption for his monasteries from episcopal jurisdiction during his lifetime as Abbot of Luxeuil, but the privilege was not obtained until 641 when Walbert was abbot.

## CHAPTER XVII

### Irish Influence on the Upper Rhine

WHILST the Franks of Burgundy and Austrasia, called to follow the great Irish monk into Lombardy, formed in a gorge of the Apennines a center of energetic reaction against Arian heresy, against the effeminacy of the Lombard monks[1] and the effects of that paganism which still existed among the peasants, the Irish monks, who had been expelled from Luxeuil with their illustrious compatriot, but who had followed him only to the foot of the Alps, sowed the seed amid the semi-pagan populations of Eastern Helvetia and of Rhaetia. One of them, Sigisbert[2], separated from his master at the foot of the hill which has since been called St. Gotthard, and crossing the glaciers and peaks of Crispalt, directing his steps to the East, arrived at the source of the Rhine, and from there descended into a vast solitude, where he built a cell of branches near a fountain.

The few inhabitants of these wild regions, who were still idolaters, surrounded him, admired him, and listened to him; but when he attempted to cut down the sacred oak, the object of their traditional worship, one of the pagans aimed an axe at his head. The sign of the cross disarmed this assailant. The work of conversion proceeded slowly, supported by a neighboring noble, who became a Christian and then a monk under the teachings of the Irish missionary, and who endowed

[1]As evidenced by their revolt against Athala. Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 1.

[2]Disentis is still a Benedictine monastery famous for its library. It can be reached today by a branch line from the St. Gotthard route over the Alps to Turin.

with all his possessions the new-born monastery, which still exists under the name of Disentis. Thus was won and sanctified, from its very source, that Rhine whose waters were to bathe so many illustrious monastic sanctuaries.

Not far from the spot where the Rhine falls into Lake Constance, and a little to the south of the lake, Gall, cured of his fever, but deeply saddened by the departure of his master, chose a retreat which his name was to make immortal[1]. A deacon, much given to hunting and fishing, pointed out to him a wild solitude enclosed within wooded heights, with abundant streams, but inhabited by bears, boars, and wolves.

"If the Lord is with us, who can be against us?" said Gall; and he set out with some provisions in his wallet, and a small net for fishing.

Towards evening they arrived at the spot where the torrent of the Steinach hollows a bed for itself in the rocks. As he walked on, praying, his foot caught in the brushwood and he fell. The deacon ran to raise him up.

"No," said Gall: "here is my chosen habitation; here is my resting-place forever[2]."

There he arranged two hazel-boughs into the form of a cross, attached to it the relics which he carried round his neck[3], and passed the night in prayer. Before his devotions were concluded, a bear descended from the mountain to collect the remains of the traveler's meal.

Gall threw him a loaf, and said to him, "In the name of Christ, withdraw from this valley; the neighboring mountains shall be common to us and thee, but on con-

[1]The town of St. Gall now stands around the site of the ancient monastery. It has a population of about 40,000.

[2]*Vita Galli,* Auctore Walahfrido I. 11, M. G. H. IV, p. 293.

[3]"Relics of the Blessed Mother of God and of the holy martyrs, Maurice and Desiderius." *Vita Galli,* auc. Wal., I. 11.

dition that thou shalt do no more harm either to man or beast[1]."

The next day the deacon went to fish in the torrent, and, as he threw his net, two demons appeared to him under the form of two women about to bathe, who threw stones at him, and accused him of having led into the desert the cruel men who had always overcome them. Gall, when he came, exorcised these phantoms; they fled, ascending the course of the torrent, and could be heard on the mountain, weeping and crying as with the voices of women:

"Where shall we go? This stranger hunts us from the midst of men, and even from the depths of the desert"; while other voices asked, "whether the Christian was still there, and if he would not soon depart[2]."

These poetic traditions, transmitted from lip to lip among the first Christians of Helvetia, gave a natural picture of the effect produced upon the souls of the inhabitants by the double struggle of the Irish missionaries against the gods of paganism and the forces of nature. The entire life of the celebrated apostle of German Switzerland is thus taken possession of by legends, which have interwoven with it many tales, the charm of which detains us in spite of ourselves.

One of these shows him to us appealed to by the same Duke of Alemannia who wished to expel Columban and his companions out of his province, but who now claimed the help of the holy solitary whose fame already extended afar to heal his daughter possessed by a devil who resisted all exorcisms. He cried that he would yield only to Gall, who had already banished him and his fellows from the banks of the Lakes of Zurich and Con-

[1]Ibid. An ancient ivory carving of the ninth century, the work of Tuotillo, represents this incident of St. Gall's life.

[2]*Vita Galli*, auc. Wal., *Op. Cit.*, p. 294.

stance. Gall refused to go, and disappeared into the mountains of Rhaetia; he was found there in a cavern, and led to the ducal castle at Überlingen. He found the young princess lying, as if dead, upon the knees of her mother, her eyes shut, and her mouth open. He knelt down by her side, and after a fervent prayer, commanded the demon to come out of her[1].

The zealous solitary refused the bishopric of Constance[2], for which the Duke of Alemannia would have nominated him, alleging as his reason the kind of interdict which his master had pronounced at the moment of separation, and returned into his dear solitude, which ten or twelve native Christians soon shared with him.

He selected one of these to send across the Alps to make inquiries concerning the death of Columban, who brought back from Bobbio the news of his death, and the crosier of the illustrious exile, which he had bequeathed to his compatriot and friend as a sign of absolution[3].

Ten years later, Gall received a deputation of six monks, Irish like himself, from Luxeuil, who came in the name of the community to pray his acceptance of the government of the great abbey, vacant by the death of

[1]Ibid, p. 295-304.

[2]This event must be placed in 516-517. St. Gall recommended John, his companion, for the See of Constance. This was three years after John had joined Gall, which took place during the short reign of Sigibert, the infant son of Theuderic, before he was slain by Clothaire in 613. In rejecting the dignity, Gall alleged a prohibition against foreigners becoming bishops. Some think that the event must have occurred after the Synod of Clichi, 626-627, when such a canon was enacted, but it is likely that Gall was still more familiar with the Canons of St. Celestine on the same matter and which he would have received from Patrician times.

[3]*Vita Galli,* Auc. Wettino, p. 26, *M. G. H.* 271. Columban's death had been revealed to St. Gall and his first Mass was for the repose of his master's soul.

St. Columban's staff was preserved in the abbey church of St. Gall in the ninth century and probably much later. Metlake, *Life of St. Columban,* p. 225, note.

Eustace[1]. But he again refused to leave that asylum which he had formed for himself, and where he continued to preach and edify the surrounding population, receiving disciples and visitors in always increasing numbers, whom he supported by the produce of his fishing.

When he died[2], the entire country of the Alemannians had become a Christian province, and around his cell were already collected the rudiments of the great monastery which, under the same name of St. Gall, was to become one of the most celebrated schools of Christendom, and one of the principal centres of intellectual life in the Germanic world[3].

[1] *Vita Galli,* Auc. Wal. I. 28. St. Eustace died in the spring of 629, April 2nd, according to old martyrologies. The date is fixed by Havet from that of the accession of St. Walbert. See Jonas, *V. Col.* II, *M. G. H.* p. 129, note by Bruno Krusch. This is also supported by inferences from passages in Jonas and his relations with Athala, Bertulf and Eustace.

[2] The date of St. Gall's death is given by Mabillon as 646, which appears to be too late to fit in with what we know of his later years. The most probable date is 635. See II, Chap. II, p. 174.

[3] In 1805 Napoleon ordered the monastery to be dissolved and this decree was executed by the popular assembly of St. Gall. The abbot's hall has been used as a government building, the monastery was turned into a classical school, but the library remained in Catholic hands. A few monks remain as the custodians of its treasures. For a complete account of the famous monastery see *The Abbey of St. Gall,* Clark.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Glory of Luxeuil

SEVERAL generations passed before St. Gall[1] could accomplish its glorious destinies, while the principal foundation of Columban immediately attained the climax of its greatness and popularity. No monastery of the West had yet shone with so much lustre, or attracted so many disciples, as Luxeuil, since the exile of its illustrious founder fixed upon it the attention and sympathy of Christian Gaul. It may be remembered that, at the time of Columban's exile, none of his monks who were not Irish were allowed to follow him.

One of these, named Eustace, who was born of a noble family in Burgundy[2], and who had been a soldier before entering Luxeuil, had to be torn from the arms of his spiritual father. After a time, he followed him to Bregenz, whence he returned to Luxeuil to govern the community deprived of its natural head, and to dispute possession with the secular persons who were invading it on all sides, and who had even established their shepherds in the enclosure inhabited by the monks. Eustace was intrusted by Clothaire II, when he became sole master of the three Frank kingdoms, with the mission of recalling Columban, as we have already seen[3]. Upon

[1]St. Gall himself seems to have gathered around him a few monks who followed the Rule of St. Columban, but the famous abbey did not begin to develop until the time of St. Othmar a hundred years later, A. D. 720-760. Previous to that date there existed on the site a church dedicated to St. Gall.

[2]Some traditions regard Eustace as Irish, but the fact that he was not allowed to accompany Columban when driven from Luxeuil proves that he was a native of Gaul. The king expressly forbade any but those of Irish or British origin to accompany him. Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 20.

[3]Chapter XIV, Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 30.

the refusal of the latter, Eustace remained at the head of the great abbey, which attracted an increasing number of monks and the veneration of the nations.

However, the missionary spirit and the desire to preach exercised an overwhelming influence over Eustace as over all the disciples of the great Irish missionary. The bishops assembled in the Council of Bonneuil-sur-Marne[1] by Clothaire II, nominated him to preach the faith to unconverted nations. He began with the Varasques, who inhabited not far from Luxeuil, the banks of the Doubs, near Baume, some of whom were still idolaters, and worshipped the genii of the woods, the fauns and dryads of classic antiquity, while the others had fallen victims to heresy. He afterwards traveled, beyond the countries that Columban had visited, among the Boïens or Bavarians. His mission was not without success; but Luxeuil, which could not remain thus without a head, soon recalled him[2].

During the ten years of his rule, a worthy successor of Columban, he succeeded in securing the energetic support of the Frankish nobility, as well as the favor of Clothaire II[3]; under his active and intelligent administration, the abbey founded by St. Columban attained its highest point of splendor, and was recognized as the monastic capital of all the countries under the Franks.

The other monasteries, into which laxity and the secular spirit had but too rapidly found their way, yielded one after another to the happy influence of Luxeuil, and gradually renewed themselves by its example. Abbots animated by sincere zeal did not hesitate to draw from that new fountain the strength and light with which they found themselves unprovided in their ancient sanc-

[1] A. D. 616.
[2] Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 8.
[3] Clothaire II died in A. D. 628.

tuaries. Among them was Conon, the abbot of the famous monastery of Lérins, which had been, two centuries before, the most illustrious community of the West, but which had since passed through all the vicissitudes of a slow decay.

The great abbey of Sequania became thus a nursery of bishops and abbots—preachers and reformers for the whole Church of these vast countries, and principally for the two kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy. It owed this preponderating influence not only to the monastic regularity which was strictly observed there, but especially to the flourishing school established by Columban, which he had intrusted, while he remained there, to the special charge of Eustace, and whose progress the latter, when he himself became abbot, promoted with unwearied zeal[1].

Luxeuil was the most celebrated school of Christendom during the seventh century, and the most frequented. The monks and clerics of other monasteries, and, more numerous still, the children of the noblest Frankish and Burgundian races, crowded to it. Lyons, Autun, Langres and Strasburg, the most famous cities of Gaul, sent their youth thither. The fathers came to study with their children; some aspiring to the honor of counting themselves one day among the sons of St. Columban; others to re-enter into secular life with the credit of having drawn their knowledge of divine and human learning from so famous a seat of learning. As it always happens, when a great center of Christian virtues is formed

[1]Jonas *(V. Col.* II. 8) mentions four bishops from the school of Luxeuil at this time: Chagnoald, Bishop of Laon; Acharius, Bishop of Noyon; Ragnacharius, Bishop of Bâle; and Audomar (Omer), Bishop of Thérouanne. We know also that Hermenfried, Bishop of Verdun, and Donatus, Bishop of Besançon, were trained at Luxeuil by Columban, while Faron, brother of Chagnoald and Burgundofara, became Bishop of Meaux.

in the world, light and life shine forth from it, and brighten all around with irresistible energy.

From the banks of the Lake of Geneva to the coast of the North Sea, every year saw the rise of some monastery peopled and founded by the children of Luxeuil, whilst the episcopal cities sought as bishops men trained to the government of souls by the regenerating influence of this great monastery. Besançon, Noyon, Laon, Verdun, and the diocesan capitals of the country of the Rauraques and Morins, were so fortunate as to obtain such bishops almost at the same time. Their good fortune was envied by all, and all vied in seeking superiors whom they concluded beforehand to be saints. And it was with reason; for perhaps so great a number of men, honored by the Church after their death with public worship, has never been collected on one point, or into so short a space as twenty years[1].

[1]Montalembert quotes the names of twenty-one saints of Luxeuil from *Vie des Saintes de Franche-Comté* all of whom lived within the same generation: 1. Columban. 2. Columban the Younger. 3. Dichuil. 4. Lua. 5. Gall. 6. Ragnacharius. 7. Acharius. 8. Valery. 9. Waldolenus. 10. Sigisbert. 11. Eustace. 12. Chagnoald. 13. Hermenfried. 14. Agilus. 15. Donatus. 16. Athala. 17. Leobard. 18. Bobolenus. 19. Ursicinus. 20. Waldalenus. 21. Colombin.

## CHAPTER XIX

### A False Brother

THIS remarkable prosperity was threatened with a sudden interruption through the intrigues of a false brother who had stolen into the monastic family of Columban. A man named Agrestius[1] who had been notary or secretary to King Theuderic, the persecutor of Columban, came one day to give himself and all his property to Luxeuil. Being admitted among the monks, he soon showed a desire to go, like Eustace, to preach the faith to the pagans. In vain the abbot, who could see no evangelical quality in him, attempted to restrain that false zeal. He was obliged to let him go.

Agrestius followed the footsteps of Eustace into Bavaria, but accomplished nothing, and passed from thence into Istria and Lombardy, where he embraced the schism of the Three Chapters[2], which had already put Columban in danger of compromising himself with the Holy See. But the authority of the sovereign Pontiff had not been slow in exercising its legitimate influence upon the Italian disciples of the great Irish monk: and when Agrestius attempted to involve the second abbot of Bobbio, Athala, in the schism, he was so badly received that he imagined himself entitled to address the

[1]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 9.

[2]Jonas here as elsewhere is silent on the question of the Three Chapters. What was merely a controversy in the time of St. Columban had now developed into a schism. Columban in his time had inclined to the view now held by schismatics and while Jonas and the monks of Bobbio must have known and understood the part Columban had taken, still it would have been unwise to mention his connection with it twenty-five years later and thus run the risk of having the authority of his hero quoted to support the views of schismatics.

successor of Columban in an epistle full of invectives and calumnies.

He returned thence to Luxeuil, where he tried to corrupt his former brethren. Eustace then remembered what the exiled Columban had written to them, in his letter from Nantes, just before his embarkation: "If there is one among you who holds different sentiments from the others, send him away"; and he commanded Agrestius to leave the community.[1]

To avenge himself, the schismatic began to snarl, says the contemporary annalist, spreading here and there injurious imputations against that same rule of St. Columban which he himself had professed and the success of which could not fail to have excited some jealousy and hostility. One of the bishops, Abellinus of Geneva, listended to his denunciations, and exerted himself to make the neighboring prelates share his dislike. King Clothaire, who heard of it, and who was always full of solicitude for Luxeuil, assembled most of the bishops of the kingdom of Burgundy in council at Mâcon[2]. To this council Eustace was called, and the accuser invited to state his complaints against the Rule of Luxeuil. He says nothing of the celebration of Easter according to the Irish custom, which proves that Columban or his disciples had finally given up that practice; nor were the severe penalties of the Penitential touched upon.

His complaints were directed against a few insignificant peculiarities, which he called superfluous, contrary to the canons, or showing a personal spirit. "I have discovered," said he, "that Columban has established usages which are not those of the whole Church." And thereupon he accused his former brethren, as with so many

[2]A. D. 626.
[1]*Letter from Nantes, M. G. H.* III, p. 166.

heresies, of making the sign of the cross upon their spoons when eating; of asking a blessing in entering or leaving any monastic building; and of multiplying prayers at Mass[1].

He insisted especially against the Irish tonsure, which Columban had introduced into France, and which consisted solely in shaving the front of the head from one ear to the other, without touching the hair of the back part, while the Greeks shaved the entire head, and the Romans only the crown, leaving the hair in the form of a crown around the lower part of the head[2]. This last custom, as is well known, became the prevalent one in all the religious orders of the West.

Eustace had no difficulty in justifying the customs of Luxeuil, and in discomfiting the violence of his accuser. But as Agrestius always returned to the charge, the abbot said to him:

"In presence of these bishops, I, the disciple and successor of him whose institute thou condemnest, cite thee to appear with him, within a year, at the tribunal of the justice of Him whose servant thou hast attempted to calumniate."

The solemnity of this appeal had an effect even upon the prelates who leant to Agrestius' side: they urged him to be reconciled to his former abbot, and the latter, who was gentleness itself, consented to give him the kiss of peace. But this goodness did not benefit Agrestius. Hopeless of succeeding at Luxeuil itself, he sowed revolt and calumny in the other monasteries which had pro-

[1]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 9. The "Bobbio Missal" used there soon after the time of St. Columban is extant at the Ambrosian Library of Milan. It is of Irish origin.

[2]The Council of Toledo, A. D. 633, definitely legislated in favor of the Roman tonsure.

ceeded, like Luxeuil, from the colonizing genius of Columban, at Remiremont[1] and Faremoutier[2]. But, before the end of the year, he was slain with a blow of an axe by a slave, whose wife, it is believed, he had intended to dishonor.

[1]See Chapter XXXI, p. 132.
[2]See Chapter XXVIII, p. 117.

## CHAPTER XX

### Mother of Monasteries

THE bishops of the Council of Mâcon, and the Bishop of Geneva above all others, became from that time the champions and protectors of the institute of St. Columban. Like them, many other prelates of Gaul distinguished themselves by their eagerness in founding or protecting new monasteries destined to extend or practice the Irish Rule. The glory of Columban and Luxeuil came forth uninjured, and indeed increased, from this trial.

However, although no contemporary document expressly says as much, it is evident that from that time the heads of the institution perceived the necessity of softening the intense individuality of their founder's spirit[1]. Through the passionate and exaggerated accusations of Agrestius, their eyes were opened to the dangers of isolation, even in what were apparently unimportant details of observance and regular discipline. They perceived with profound Christian sagacity, that they must give up the thought of extending the Rule of their master everywhere and as the only monastic code. They knew that by their side a Rule more ancient than their own, and fortified by the formal approbation of the Roman Pontiff, lived and flourished, without brilliant success, it is true, up to that time, but not without fruit or honor.

[1]Rather they felt the need of a more definite and detailed monastic code than the one Columban had given them; this need the Benedictine Rule supplied. Many of the new monasteries retained the severest observances of St. Columban's Rule with that of St. Benedict. In other words the spirit with which these seventh century monasteries observed the Italian Benedictine Rule was the spirit that Columban brought with him from the monasteries of Ireland.

By what means was the Abbey of Luxeuil brought into contact with the Rule of St. Benedict? By what argument did this powerful and celebrated house open her doors to another glory and authority than that of her founder? There is no answer to this question: but it is certain that, under the successor of Eustace, who died a year after the Council of Mâcon, and after that time, in the numerous foundations of which we have still to speak, the two Rules almost always appear together, as the joint bases of communities originated by the disciples of Columban. The monastic republic of Gaul which apparently ought to have recognized only one dictator, henceforth was to have two consuls, like the Roman republic of old.

The successor of Eustace was Walbert, also a pupil and companion of Columban. Born of Sicambrian race[1], of a noble and wealthy family, he had been remarked for his bravery in war, before he enrolled himself in the army of the Irish missionary. But the attraction of the cloister overcame the warlike inclinations of the Frank. When his mind was made up, he went to Luxeuil, taking with him not only a gift of all his vast domains, but also his military dress, of which he would divest himself in the monastery itself: he offered also the arms with which he had won his fame; they were suspended from the arches of the church, and remained there during the course of ages, as a monument of the noblest victory which a man can achieve here below.

He obtained permission from Eustace to live alone in the hollow of a rock, near a fountain in the midst of the wood, three miles from the abbey. It was here that, after the death of Columban's first successor Eustace, and the refusal of Gall to accept the office, the monks of

[1] *Acta SS. O. S. B. T. II. Paris Ed. p. 512. Vita S. Germani, Abb. Grandiv.*

Luxeuil sought Walbert to make him their third abbot[1]. He ruled them for forty years with honor and success. His name remains, in the surrounding countries, the most popular of all those who have brought honor to the great abbey of Sequania. He maintained discipline and encouraged profound study, while he increased the property of the community, by his own donations in the first place, and then by those which the reputation of the monastery attracted from all sides.

To the temporal independence thus secured, was soon added a sort of spiritual independence eagerly sought by all the great monasteries and which they spared no pains in soliciting either from the Popes or provincial councils. Their object was to protect themselves, by a solemn privilege, from the vexatious abuses, which the diocesan bishop, by right of his spiritual authority, could subject them to, by taking up his abode among them against their will, with a numerous retinue, by making them pay a very high fee for the holy chrism and the ordination of their brethren, or, above all, by obstructing the freedom of their elections. Lérins had obtained this privilege from the Council of Arles in 451, and Agaune from the Council of Chalons in 579. Luxeuil could not fail to feel the importance of the same rights and the same necessities.

Under the abbacy of Walbert, and upon a petition made in the name of King Clovis II., then a minor, Pope John IV, accorded the privilege of exemption[2] from episcopal authority "to the monastery of St. Peter, founded," says the pontifical act, "by the venerable Columban, a

[1]St. Eustace died in 629. Thirty-six years is probably more correct. Walbert died in 665. Toward the end of his life he retired to a hermitage near Luxeuil which is still to be seen. See *V. Col. M. G. H.* p. 129 note by Bruno Krusch.

[2]A. D. 641. Bobbio had received the privilege in 628, the first year of Bertulf's abbacy. Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 23.

Scot, who came a stranger, but fervent in zeal and sanctity, into the kingdom of the Franks. . . . If, which God forbid, the monks of the said monastery should become lukewarm in the love of God and in the observance of the institutes of their father, they shall be punished by the abbot, that is, by the father of the monastery; and if he himself should fall into indifference and contempt of the paternal Rule, the Holy See shall provide for that."

Six hundred monks formed, under the cross of Walbert, the permanent garrison of this monastic citadel, whence missionaries, solitary or in parties, issued daily to found new monastic colonies at a distance. There even came a time when the throng of monks seeking entrance seems to have embarrassed Walbert, and he was obliged to seek means of placing them elsewhere and at a distance. For under him, even more than under his predecessors, the productiveness of Luxeuil became prodigious. It was at this period particularly, as says a contemporary, that, throughout the whole of Gaul, in the castles and cities, in plains and in deserts, armies of monks and colonies of nuns abounded everywhere, carrying with them the glory and the laws of Benedict and Columban[1].

[1] *Vita S. Salabergae, Acta SS. O. S. B.* Saec. II, p. 425. The writer adds that "before that time few monasteries could be found in those places."

## CHAPTER XXI

### The Foundation of Lure

IT WOULD be a hard task to trace a faithful picture of that monastic colonization of Gaul, which had, during the whole of the seventh century, its center in Luxeuil. To find our way through this labyrinth, it is necessary to glance quickly at the principal provinces that received, one after another, the benefits of this peaceful conquest. This rapid survey will permit us to breathe the perfume of some of those flowers of exquisite charity and sweet humility, which blossomed amid the savage violence and brutal cruelty of which Christendom was then the theatre.

It will show us also how many obstacles and dangers these men of peace and prayer had to surmount, and how, subdued under the yoke of the monastic rule, in solitude or in the community of the cloister, the Franks, who gave themselves to God under the laws of Columban or Benedict, allowed neither the generous courage nor the proud independence of their fathers to degenerate in them. They displayed, above all, in every encounter, that individual energy and initiative force which were characteristic of the Germanic races and which alone could regenerate the West, so long sunk under the ignoble burden of Roman decrepitude.

But before studying the action of Columban and his followers upon the Frank and Burgundian nobility at a distance, we find, not far from Luxeuil, a great foundation due to one of those Irish monks who were the faithful companions of him who, four centuries after his death, was still called "the king of monks and con-

ductor of the chariot of God." It will be recollected that, at his expulsion from Luxeuil, the Irish monks alone were permitted to follow him. One of them, then advanced in years, and believed to have been a brother of St. Gall, a monk whose Celtic name has disappeared under the Latin appellation of Deicolus[1] or Desle (servant of God), when he had reached with Columban a place covered with brushwood, some miles distant from Luxeuil, upon the road to Besançon, felt his limbs fail, and perceived that he could go no farther[2]. Throwing himself at the feet of his abbot, he asked and obtained permission, with the blessing of Columban, to accomplish his pilgrimage in this desert.

After a tearful separation, when he found himself alone, he set out to find a place of rest in the forest. Searching through the thicket, he met a flock of swine, the herdsman of which was thunderstruck at the sight of this stranger of great height, clad in a costume unknown to him.

"Who are you?" asked the swineherd. "Whence come you? What seek you? What are you doing in this wild country without guide or companion?"

"Be not afraid, my brother," said the old Irishman, "I am a traveler and a monk; and I beg you for charity to show me hereabouts a place where a man may live."

The swineherd answered him that in this neighborhood the only place he knew was marshy, but still habitable, because of the abundance of water, and belonged to a powerful vassal called Werfair. He refused, however, to guide him to it, lest his flock should stray in his

[1]The extant life of St. Desle or Dichuil is not older than the tenth century. He is not mentioned by Jonas. There is a tradition that he came from Bangor with St. Columban and even a tenth century Life might be expected to reflect the tradition of Lure substantially, when we remember how detailed were the annals of the old chroniclers of those ancient monasteries.

[2]*Acta SS. O. S. B. II. p. 103. Vita S. Deicoli.*

absence; but Desle insisted, and said, with that daring gayety which we still find among the Irish:

"If thou do me this little favor, I answer for it that thou shalt not lose the very least of thy herd; my staff shall replace thee, and be swineherd in thy absence."

And thereupon he stuck his traveler's staff into the ground, round which the swine collected and lay down. The two set out through the wood, the Irish monk and the Burgundian swineherd, and thus was discovered, and taken possession of, the site of the existing town of Lure, and of that great monastery of the same name, the abbot of which, eleven centuries after this adventure, was reckoned among the princes of the Holy Roman Empire.

But Desle was not at the end of his difficulties. Near his new retreat was a little church, frequented by the shepherds and peasants of the neighborhood, and served by a secular priest[1], who looked unfavorably on the arrival of the disciple of Columban in these regions:

"This monk," he said, "will interfere with my living."

And he told his hearers that this stranger was a magician, who hid himself in the wood that he might give himself up to his incantations, "and that he had come at midnight, under pretense of praying, to my chapel, the doors of which I had closed in vain: a single word from him sufficed to open them."

The priest afterwards denounced him to Werfair, the lord of the place, asking him if he was disposed to allow a certain foreign monk to take possession of his chapel, without anyone being able to put him out of it. With that brutal ferocity which constantly reappeared among these baptized barbarians, Werfair commanded that the

[1]Like Winnioc at Luxeuil and Willmar at Bregenz, a few scattered secular priests were trying to stem the tide of paganism that had poured in over Gaul, but their spirit had suffered from the general demoralization.

stranger should be seized, if possible, and a terrible punishment should be inflicted on him. But before that impious order could be obeyed, he was himself suddenly seized with a shameful and mortal sickness. His pious widow, in the hope of softening divine justice towards the soul of her husband, made a gift of all the land that surrounded the site of Lure to the monk who called himself "the pilgrim of Christ," and numerous disciples soon came to live by his side a life of peace and prayer.

Their pious solitude was one day disturbed, as has been aready mentioned[1], by King Cothaire II., whose name perpetually recurs in the history of Columban and his disciples. As the king was one day hunting in a royal domain near Lure, a boar, pursued by the nobles of his train, took refuge in the cell of Desle.

The saint laid his hand upon its head, saying, "Since thou comest to ask charity, thy life shall be saved."

The king, when told of it by the hunters who had followed the animal, desired to see that wonder for himself. When he heard that the old recluse was a disciple of that Columban whom he had always honored and protected, he inquired affectionately what means of subsistence the abbot and his companions could find in that solitude.

"It is written," said the Irishman, "that nothing shall be wanting to those who fear God; we lead a poor life, but with the fear of God it suffices for us."

Clothaire bestowed upon the new community all the forests, pasturage and fisheries possessed by the public treasury in the neighborhood of Lure, which became from that time, and always remained, one of the richest monasteries in Christendom[2].

[1] *Acta SS. O. S. B. II. Vita S. Deicoli* c. 13. Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, English Edition p. 518.

[2] Acta SS. O. S. B. T. II. *Vita S. Deicoli* p. 112, 115. This tenth century manuscript speaks of St. Columban as a "king and charioteer of God."—"Monarches atque auriga Dei Columbanus." Ibid. p. 103.

## CHAPTER XXII

### A Saint's Benediction

LURE and Luxeuil were situated in the north of ancient Sequania, then included in the kingdom of Burgundy, of which, as well as of Austrasia, Clothaire II. had become the master. The whole of that wide and beautiful district of Burgundy which retains its name, and which, to the west and east of the river Saône, has since formed the duchy, and particularly the county of Burgundy, was naturally the first to yield to the influence of Luxeuil. This district was, from the time of Columban, governed, or rather possessed, by a powerful family of Burgundian origin, whose connection with Columban and his disciples demonstrated once more the remarkable influence exercised upon the Frankish nobility by the great Irish monk.

This house was represented by two brothers, who both bore the title of duke: the one, Amalgar, was duke of Burgundy to the west and north of the Doubs; the other, Waldelen or Wandelin, lived at Besançon, and his duchy extended to the other side of the Jura, as far as the Alps. Waldelen and his wife had no children to whom they could leave their immense possessions. The renown of the first miracles and great sanctity of the Irish monk, who had established himself not far from Besançon, drew them to Luxeuil[1]. They went to ask him to pray for them, and to obtain them a son from the Lord.

"I shall do it willingly," said the saint; "and I shall ask not only one, but several, on condition that you give

[1]This event, according to the text of Jonas, seems to have occurred at Luxeuil, which would place it after 590. Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 14.

me the first-born, that I may baptize him with my own hands, and dedicate him to the Lord."

The promise was made, and the mercy obtained. The duchess herself carried her first-born to Luxeuil, where Columban baptized him, giving him the name of Donat (Donatus) in testimony of the gift which his parents had made of him to God. He was restored to his mother to be nursed, and then brought back to be trained in the monastery, where the child grew up, and remained until, thirty years after, he was taken from it to be made bishop of Besançon[1].

In that metropolitan city, where the exile of Columban had doubtless left popular recollections, Donatus, out of love for his spiritual father, established a monastery of men under the Rule of Columban, dedicated to St. Paul[2], as Luxeuil was to St. Peter. He added, however, to the observance of the Rule of the founder of Luxeuil, that of the Rule of St. Benedict, which was introduced about the same period at Luxeuil itself. He himself lived there as a monk, always wearing the monastic dress. Afterwards, with the help of his mother[3], in his episcopal city of Besançon, he originated the monastery of Jussamoutier for nuns, giving them a rule in which that of St. Caesarius was combined with various provisions borrowed from the Rules of Columban and Benedict.

[1]Bruno Krusch points out (*M. G. H.* p. 79 note) that Donatus is mentioned among the bishops present at the Council of Clichi, A. D. 626-627. Consequently he must have been over thirty years at the time. He was probably very much older. Even in those early days we may suppose that young men were rarely appointed bishops.

[2]See Jonas, *V. Col.* I, *M. G. H.* IV. p. 80 note by Bruno Krusch. St. Donatus was buried at the monastery of St. Paul at Besançon. The site is called Palatium by Jonas.

[3]Flavia, the mother of St. Donatus, after the death of her husband, according to Jonas, established this monastery. It is called Jussanum in the Catalogues of the Bishops of Besançon. Flavia is said to be buried within the church of Notre Dame, which is now built on the site of this monastery. *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 335.

The Latin of the preamble, which was written by Donatus himself, does honor to the school of Luxeuil.

The daughters of Jussamoutier rivalled the monks of Luxeuil in zeal and fervor, but they asked expressly that the laws of the two patriarchs should be modified so as to suit the difference of sex. They do not seem, however, to have objected to any of the severities of Irish tradition, for we see with surprise in that version of the three Rules adapted to their use, the penalty of fifty or even a hundred lashes inflicted upon these virgins for certain faults against discipline. The wiser and gentler rule of Benedict gained ground, notwithstanding, at each new manifestation of religious life.

The younger brother of Donatus, Ramelen[1], who succeeded his father as Duke of Transjuran Burgundy, signalized his reverence for the memory of Columban by the foundation or reconstruction of the abbey of Romainmoutier, in a pass on the southern side of the Jura, consecrated to prayer, two centuries before, by the founder of Condat[2]. He introduced a colony from Luxeuil there: the ancient church, often rebuilt, exists still. It has served as a model for an entire series of primitive churches, and the basis of an ingenious and novel system, which characterizes the period and style of the principal Christian monuments between the Jura and the Alps.

We have said that the father of St. Donatus had a brother, another lord, Amalgar, whose duchy extended to the gates of Besançon. This last had two children, who, like their cousins, are connected with Luxeuil. The son named Waldelen, like his uncle, was also intrusted to

[1]Or Chramelenus. Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 14.

[2]The famous monastery of Condat was founded by St. Romain in the first half of the fifth century. St. Romain died between 450 and 460. The invasions which had destroyed the old monasteries had left it in ruins.

the care of Columban, and became a monk at Luxeuil[1], whence his father took him and placed him at the head of the abbey of Bèze[2], which he had founded in honor of God, St. Peter, and St. Paul. It was situated between the Saône and the Tille, near a fountain still known and admired for the immense volume of water which flows from it, and to the east of a forest called the Velvet Forest, a name that preserves to our own days a trace of the impression produced by its dense verdure upon the admiring popular mind, at a time when the common mind seems to have been more observant than now of such beauties. The new abbot carried the Rule of Columban to Bèze, and maintained it for fifty years in that sanctuary, which was long to hold its place in the first rank of French monasteries.

When his eldest brother, who had succeeded to the duchy of his father, compromised in the civil wars of the time of Ebroïn, and had to flee into Austrasia, Waldelen collected his property and joined it to that of the monastery. He offered an asylum there to his sister, Adalsind, for whom their father, Duke Amalgar, had also founded an abbey at Bregille[3], opposite Besançon on the right bank of the Doubs.

But she could not long remain there. The annoyances she met with from the inhabitants of the surrounding country obliged her to leave a place in which the ancient authority of her father, her character of abbess, and the proximity of an important city governed by her family, alike failed to protect her. This forced exile is a proof, among many others, of the obstacles and hostilities too often encountered by the religious of both sexes, despite the protection of kings and nobles, amid the unsubdued races who had invaded the West.

[1] *Epistola Col. M. G. H.* III. p. 167.
[2] c. A. D. 630.
[3] Founded c. A. D. 630-640.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Cusance and Ursanne

WHILE the various members of the most powerful family of the two Burgundies testified thus their devotion to the memory and institute of Columban, the young and noble Ermenfried obeyed the same impulse upon a more modest scale, amid the half-pagan tribes of the Varasques, who, following the Burgundian invasion from the banks of the Rhine, occupied, a little above Besançon, a district watered by the Doubs. Here the second abbot of Luxeuil, Eustace, had already attempted their conversion[1]. Ermenfried, according to the custom of the Germanic races, had been recommended in his youth, along with his brother, to King Clothaire II., the friend and protector of Columban, who had received him into his house. His noble bearing, his varied knowledge, and modest piety, gained him the favor of this prince. Clothaire had, besides, intrusted his brother with the care of the ring which was his seal-royal, and had thus constituted him chancellor of his court.

Ermenfried, recalled into his own country to receive the inheritance of a wealthy noble of his family, had found, in surveying his new possessions, a narrow little valley where two clear streams, uniting at the foot of a little hill, formed into a tributary of the Doubs, called the Cusancin, and where there had formerly existed, under the name of Cusance, a monastery of women. Contemplating this site, he was filled with a desire to raise the ruins of the abandoned sanctuary, and to consecrate himself to the Lord. When he returned to the

[1]In the mountainous country where the Alps, the Vosges and the Jura meet and form the present day frontiers between northwestern Switzerland, Germany and France. Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 8.

court of Clothaire[1], the new spirit which animated him soon became apparent.

One day, when he appeared before the king with his silken tunic in disorder and falling to his feet, Clothaire said to him:

"What is the matter, Ermenfried? What is this fashion of wearing thy tunic? Wouldst thou really become a cleric?"

"Yes," answered the Varasque, "a cleric, and even a monk; and I entreat you to grant me your permission."

The king consented, and the two brothers immediately set out for their solitude. In vain their mother urged them to marry and perpetuate their race. Ermenfried went to Luxeuil to be trained for monastic life under Walbert, received there the monastic habit and the priesthood, and returned to Cusance. There he soon became the head of a community of thirty monks, which he subordinated completely to Luxeuil, and directed with gentle and active authority, while his brother, with whom he always lived in the closest union, provided for their temporal necessities.

Ermenfried reserved the humbler labors for himself; he spent whole days in sifting the grain which the others thrashed in the barn. For he loved work and workers. On Sundays, in celebrating Mass, he distributed to the people eulogies or unconsecrated wafers[2], and when he

[1]Clothaire II died in 628 before which time we must place this event. Ermenfried and his brother spent some time in solitude before he went to Luxeuil to be trained by Walbert who became abbot in 629. So that the foundation of Cusance probably took place towards the end of the next decade, c. 640.

[2]"Eulogiae." In the early Church it was customary to bless bread or wafers during Mass and distribute them to catechumens and others who were not prepared or able to go to Holy Communion. The custom is still preserved in the Greek rite and in parts of France and Italy, where blessed bread, as distinct from the Holy Eucharist, is distributed to the faithful at High Mass and on certain feasts. In the Rule of St. Columban a very clear distinction is made between "Eulogiae" and "Sacrificium" or the Blessed Sacrament. Cf. *Regula Coenobialis* Chapter IV and Chapter XV.

perceived the hard hands of the ploughmen, he bent down to kiss with tender respect these noble marks of the week's labor.

I have surveyed the annals of all nations, ancient and modern, but I have found nothing which has moved me more, or better explained the true causes of the victory of Christianity over the ancient world, than the image of this German, this son of the victors of Rome and conquerors of Gaul, become a monk, and kissing before the altar of Christ, the hard hands of the Gaulish husbandmen, in that forgotten corner of Jura, without even suspecting that an obscure witness took note of it for forgetful posterity[1].

Before we leave Sequania, let us ascend into the country of the Rauraques (the ancient bishopric of Bâle). There, on the banks of that deep and narrow gorge, hollowed by the Doubs in the very heart of the Jura, upon the existing boundary of Switzerland and Franche-Comté, we shall find the little town of St. Ursanne; at the spot where the river, having run since its source from south to north, makes a sudden turn towards the west, before doubling back to the south, and forms thus a sort of peninsula still called "the close of the Doubs."

It originated in the choice that another disciple of Columban made of that wild country in order to live there in solitude. Ursicinus, which has been transformed into Ursanne, was probably Irish, since he left Luxeuil with Columban; but, like Gall and Sigisbert[2], he did not follow him into Italy; and, after having founded a little Christianity upon the fertile shores of the Lake of Bienne, he preferred to establish himself among the precipitous rocks covered with firs which overlook the upper course of the Doubs. Climbing into

[1]Egilbertus, *Vita S. Ermenfriedi,* Ap. Bolland. T. VII. Septemb. p. 120.

[2]The founder of Disentis. See Chapter XVII.

the most inaccessible corners of these wild gorges, in search of their strayed cattle, the herdsmen one day discovered him and told, on descending, that they had found at the top of the mountain a wan and emaciated man, like another St. John the Baptist, who most surely lived in community with the bears, and was supported by them. Thence doubtless, arose the name of Ursicinus or Urson, which has replaced this monk's Celtic name.

In this instance, as invariably through the annals of monastic extension, the great examples of mortification and spiritual courage that excited the admiration and sympathy of some, aroused the derision and hostility of others. A rich inhabitant of the neighborhood drew the solitary to his house on pretense of hearing him preach; and having made him drink wine, to which he was not accustomed, the poor saint soon became uncomfortable and asked leave to withdraw. Then the perfidious host, with all his family, began to mock the monk with bursts of laughter, calling him glutton, drunkard, and hypocrite, and accusing him as such to the surrounding population. Urson cursed the house of the traitor and returned to his solitude.

This adventure brought no discredit upon him: far from that, he had many disciples, and the increasing number of those who would live like him, and with him, obliged him to leave the huts which he raised upon the heights, and to build his convent at the bottom of the pass and on the bank of the river. It is to be remarked that he had here a hospital for the sick poor, and kept baggage-cattle to bring them from a distance and through the steep paths of these mountains[1].

[1]Compendium Vitae S. Ursicini apud Trouillat, *Monuments de l'Ancien Evêché de Bâle*, Porentruy, 1852, T. I., p. 42.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### First Martyrs of the New Monasticism

THE little monastery that our Irishman had founded was taken up and occupied after his death by another colony from Luxeuil, led by Germain, a young noble of Trèves[1], who, at seventeen, in spite of king and bishop, had left all to flee into solitude. He was of the number of those recruits whose coming to enroll themselves at Luxeuil alarmed Abbot Walbert by their multitude. The latter, recognizing the piety and ability of the young neophyte, intrusted to him the direction of the monks whom he sent into a valley of Raurasia, of which Gondoin, the first known duke of Alsatia, had just made him a gift. This valley though fertile and well watered, was almost unapproachable. Germain, either by a miracle, or by labors in which he himself took the principal share, had to open a passage through the rocks which formed the approach of the defile.

The valley took the name of Moustier-Grandval, after the monastery, which he long ruled, in conjunction with that of St. Ursanne. The abbot of Luxeuil, with the consent of his brethren, had expressly freed the monks whom he intended, under the authority of Germain, to people the new sanctuary, from all obedience to himself. In the surrounding country, the benevolent stranger, who died a victim to his zeal for his neighbor, was everywhere beloved.

A new duke of Alsatia, Adalric, set himself to oppress the population, and to trouble the monks of Grand-

[1]Vita S. Germani, Trouillat, *Monuments de l'Ancien Evêché de Bâle*, T. I, p. 49-53; *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. p. 511.

val in every possible way, treating them as rebels to the authority of his predecessor and to his own. He approached the monastery at the head of a band of Alemannians, who were as much robbers as soldiers. Germain, accompanied by the librarian of the community, went to meet the enemy.

At the sight of the burning houses, and of his poor neighbors pursued and slaughtered by the soldiers, he burst forth into tears and reproaches.

"Enemy of God and truth," he said to the duke, "is it thus that you treat a Christian country? And do you not fear to ruin this monastery which I have myself built?"

The duke listened without anger, and promised him peace. But as the abbot returned to Grandval, he met some soldiers upon his way to whom he addressed similar remonstrances:

"Dear sons, do not commit so many crimes against the people of God!"

Instead of appeasing, his words exasperated them. They divested him of his robes, and slew him as well as his companion[1]. The body of this martyr of justice and charity was carried to the church which he had built at St. Ursanne.

In the interval between the death of the founder of the abbey, and that of the first martyr of the illustrious line of Columban, this remote monastery had already felt the influence of a third saint, who, without passing through Luxeuil, had nevertheless yielded to the power of Columban's genius and Rule[2].

[1]S. Randoaldus. The relics of the martyrs SS. Germanus and Randoaldus were venerated in the abbey church until it was burned in the 16th century. *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 514. Note.

[2]St. Vandrille of Fontenelle.

## CHAPTER XXV

### St. Vandrille of Fontenelle

VANDREGISIL or Vandrille was born near Verdun, of noble and rich parents, allied to the two mayors of the Palace, Erchinoald and Pepin of Landen, who governed Neustria and Austrasia under the authority of King Dagobert I.[1], son and successor of that Clothaire II. who had been always so favorable to Columban and his disciples. This relationship had procured the young noble a favorable position in the court of the king, to whom he had been recommended in his youth. He became Count of the Palace, that is to say, judge of the causes referred to the king, and collector of the returns of the royal revenue.

But power and ambition held no place in a heart that had already felt the force of the many great examples furnished by the Frankish nobility. Refusing a marriage that his parents had arranged[2], he went to take refuge with a solitary upon the banks of the Meuse. Now the Merovingian kings had then interdicted the Frankish nobles from taking the clerical or monastic habit without their permission, an interdict founded upon the military service due to the prince, which was the soul of the social organization of the Germanic races. Dagobert therefore saw with great displeasure that a Frank, brought up in the royal court, and invested with a public charge, had thus fled, without the consent of his sovereign, from the duties of his rank. He ordered him to return.

As Vandrille very reluctantly approached the palace,

[1] A. D. 628-638.

[2] According to *Vita Wandregisili, Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. 527, he married but lived in a state of virginity.

he saw a poor man who had been thrown from his cart into the mud before the king's gates. The passers-by took no notice of him, and several even trampled on his body. The Count of the Palace immediately alighted from his horse, extended his hand to the poor driver, and the two together raised up the cart. Afterwards he went to Dagobert, amid the derisive shouts of the spectators, with his dress stained with mud; but it appeared resplendent with the light of charity in the eyes of the king, who, touched by his humble self-devotion, permitted him to follow his vocation, and forbade anyone to interfere with him[1].

When he was freed from this anxiety, Vandrille went to the tomb of St. Ursanne, which was situated on an estate belonging to his house, with which he enriched the monastery. He applied himself there by excessive austerities to subdue his flesh; struggling, for example, against the temptations of his youth, by plunging during the winter into the snow, or the frozen waters of the Doubs, and remaining there whilst he sang the psalms. Here also be found the trace of Columban's example and instructions, which led him from the side of the Jura across the Alps to Bobbio, where he admired the fervor of the disciples whom the great Irish missionary had left there.

It was there, doubtless, that he conceived so great an admiration for the memory and observance of Columban that he determined on going to Ireland to seek in the country of the founder of Luxeuil and Bobbio the secrets of penitential life and the narrow way. But God, says one of his biographers, reserved him for the Gauls. After another long sojourn in Romainmoutier, which had just been restored under the influence of the spirit of Columban, he went to Rouen, where Ouën, a holy and

[1] *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, 528.

celebrated bishop, then presided. St. Ouën had known him at the court of Dagobert, and his own youth had also felt the influence of Columban[1], so fertile even after his death.

The metropolitan of Rouen would not permit a man distinguished at once by his tried virtue and illustrious birth, to steal out of sight. It is thus that the biographer of St. Germain describes to us how the abbot of Luxeuil[2] had long sought a monk who was at once learned, holy, and of noble extraction, to preside over the colony of Grandval. For it is evident that birth was a quality infinitely valuable to the founders of monastic institutions in these days, doubtless because it gave the heads of the community the prestige necessary to hold out, even in material matters, against the usurpation and violence of the nobles and great men whose domains surrounded the new monasteries.

Bishop Ouën, therefore, bestowed holy orders upon his old friend and companion, but without being able to prevent him from again seeking monastic life. He succeeded only in establishing Vandrille in his own diocese, thanks to the munificence of the minister Erchinoald, who gave up to his kinsman a great uncultivated estate not far from the Seine, where the remains of an ancient city, destroyed in the Frankish invasion, were still to be seen under the briers and thorns.

But the time of ruins was past; the hour of revival and reconstruction had come. In that desert place, Vandrille built the abbey of Fontenelle[3], which was destined to occupy, under its proper name of St. Vandrille, so important a place in the ecclesiastical history of France and Normandy. The holy queen Bathilda, her son, King

[1]Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 27.

[2]Abbot Walbert, third Abbot of Luxeuil. *Vita S. Germani, Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. p. 513.

[3]c. A. D. 648.

Clovis II., and many noble Neustrians, added rich donations to that of Erchinoald, while a great number of others came to share the monastic life under the authority of Vandrille. He had to build four churches, amid their cells, to provide for their devotions.

He was particularly zealous in imposing upon them, along with the exercise of manual labor, the absolute renunciation of all individual property, which was the thing of all others most likely to clash with the inclinations of the sons of soldiers and rich men. And, says the hagiographer, it was admirable to see him instruct those who heretofore had taken away the possessions of others, in the art of sacrificing their own. Aided by their labors, he planted on a neighboring slope of good exposure the first vineyard which Normandy had known[1].

Vandrille, however, did not confine his activity to the foundation and government of his abbey. Fontenelle was situated in the country of Caux[2], that is, the land of the Caletes, who had been distinguished by the energy of their resistance to Caesar, and who had figured among the other tribes of Belgian Gaul in the last struggle against the pro-consul, even after the fall of Alise and the heroic Vercingetorix[3]. The land of Caux was then Christian only in name; the inhabitants had fallen back into complete and brutal barbarism. The abbot of Fontenelle went throughout the whole country, preached the Gospel everywhere, procured the destruction of the idols whom the peasants persisted in worshipping, and transformed the land to such an extent that the country people never met a priest or monk without throwing themselves at his feet as before an image of Christ.

[1]Vita S. Ansberti, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. p. 1051.

[2]In the territory of Normandy, north of the Seine and touching the English Channel.

[3]Caesar, *Gallic War*, Book VII, Chap. VII.

Vàndrille, when he died, left three hundred monks în his monastery, and a memory so popular that, four centuries after his death, his name was still celebrated by a grateful posterity in rhymes translated from the Latin into the vulgar tongue[1]. In one of the chapels of that abbey which attracted and charmed all travelers on the Seine from Rouen to the sea, rude seats were shown which had been used by the founder and his two most intimate friends, the archbishop Ouën, and Philibert, the founder of Jumièges, when they came to Fontenelle. Here these three converted nobles met in long and pleasant conferences, in which their expectations of heavenly joy and their fear of divine judgment were mingled with a noble solicitude for the triumph of justice and peace in the country of the Franks[2].

[1] *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. p. 558 note. The Abbey of Fontenelle with Jumièges up to 1790 formed, according to Montalembert, one of the finest ornaments on the banks of the Seine. In 1828, as Montalembert recalls, their ruins were still beautiful and admired, but stones from them were used by neighboring landowners to pave roads, so that they have now practically disappeared.

[2] *Vita S. Wandregisili. Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. 542.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### A Ruined Abbey on the Seine

NOTHING, or almost nothing, remains of the architectural splendors of St. Vandrille; but the ruined towers of Jumièges still testify to the travelers upon the Seine the magnificence of another abbey, still more celebrated, which was long the noblest ornament of that portion of Neustria to which the Normans have given their name, and which, like Fontenelle, is connected by means of its founder, St. Philibert, with the work and lineage of Columban.

The lives of these two founders show many analogies. Like St. Vandrille, the young Philibert was recommended by his father to King Dagobert, and at twenty left the court and military life for the cloister[1]. Like him, and still more directly than he, he was imbued with the spirit of Columban. He had been a monk and abbot[2] in the monastery of Rebais, which had its immediate origin from Luxeuil, before he went on a pilgrimage to Luxeuil itself, to Bobbio, and the other communities which followed the Irish rule. He also had ties of friendship from his youth with St. Ouën, the powerful archbishop of Rouen, and it was in the same diocese that he finally established himself, to build the great abbey which, like Fontenelle, was endowed by the gifts of Clovis II. and the holy queen Bathilda.

[1]c. A. D. 630-635. Jumièges was founded about 655, according to Lot—*Hariulf Chronicle*, note page 42.

[2]St. Philibert joined Agilus when Dagobert brought the latter from Luxeuil at the request of St. Ouën to be the first abbot of Rebais. See Chapter XXVIII. Also *Acta SS. O. S. B. II. 324.* According to *Vita S. Filiberti—Acta SS. O. S. B. II, 819*, St. Philibert was elected abbot of Rebais after the death of St. Agilus, 650 A. D.

Philibert often visited his neighbor St. Vandrille; he imitated him in working with his monks at the clearing of the conceded lands, which became fields and meadows of wonderful fertility, and like him he had to brave the animosity of the royal foresters, who stole his work-horses. Like Fontenelle, Jumièges was built upon the site of an ancient Gallo-Roman castle, which was thus replaced by what contemporaries called "the noble castle of God."

But situated upon the same banks of the Seine, and on a peninsula formed by the winding of the river, the abbey of Philibert was more accessible by water, and soon became a great centre of commerce. British and Irish sailors brought materials for clothing and shoes to the religious there in exchange for their corn and cattle. Philibert required that in all these barters with neighbors or strangers the bargain should be more profitable to the purchasers than if they were dealing with laymen. The monks had great success in the fishing of some species of porpoise (*cetacea*) which ascended the Seine, and which produced oil to light their vigils. They also fitted out vessels in which they sailed to great distances to redeem slaves and captives.

Doubtless a portion of these captives contributed to increase the number of the monks of Jumièges, which rose to nine hundred without reckoning the fifteen hundred servants who filled the office of lay-brothers. They were under a rule composed by Philibert after attentive observation of numerous monasteries of France, Italy, and Burgundy, which he had visited for that end. This was adopted by most of the communities which were then formed in Neustria in imitation of his, and of which Jumièges became the center where abbots and monks vied in seeking education or renewal of spirit.[1]

[1]St. Philibert founded, besides Jumièges, Noirmoutier on an island off the coast of Poitou, and Montivilliers for nuns in the country of the Caux. Montalembert, *Op. Cit.* p. 613.

It combined the instructions of the fathers of the desert, such as St. Basil and St. Macarius, with the precepts of the two great monastic patriarchs of the West, Benedict and Columban.

But the influence of Columban naturally predominated, in consequence of the early monastic education of Philibert and his long residence at Luxeuil and Bobbio[1]. In the great church that he built for his abbey, the magnificence of which, attested by a contemporary narrative, amazes us, he raised an altar in honor of Columban, and of him alone among all the saints whose Rules he had studied and practiced.

[1]Acta *SS. O. S. B. II, 819-20 Vita S. Filiberti.*

## CHAPTER XXVII

### St. Ouën's Boyhood Memories

BISHOP OUEN, whose influence and help had endowed the diocese of Rouen with the two immense abbeys of Fontenelle and Jumièges, was connected with Columban by a recollection of his earliest years. The great Irish monk was everywhere remarked for his love of children, and the paternal kindness he showed them. During his exile and journey from the court of the king of Neustria to that of Austrasia, he paused in a castle situated upon the Marne, which belonged to a Frank noble, the father of three sons named Adon, Radon, and Dadon, two of whom were still under age[1]. Their mother led them to the holy exile that he might bless them; this benediction brought them happiness and governed their lives.

All three were, in the first place, like other young Frank nobility, sent to the court of the king Clothaire II., and to that of his son Dagobert, who for some time reigned alone over the three Frank kingdoms. The eldest of the three brothers, Adon, was the first to break with the grandeurs and pleasures of secular life: he founded upon the soil of his own patrimony and upon a height which overlooked the Marne, the monastery of Jouarre[2], which he put under the Rule of Columban, and where he

[1]The sons of Autharius and Aiga, blessed by St. Columban on his way to Metz, A. D. 610. Jonas gives the name of the town where Autharius lived as Vulciacum, now Ussy, a small town on the Marne in the Department of Seine-et-Marne, northeast of Paris. Jonas mentions only Adon and Dadon. Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 26.

[2]Jonas calls it Joranum. The old name was Jotrus, modern Jouarre in the Department of Seine-et-Marne.

himself became a monk. Almost immediately after, there was formed by the side of this first foundation another community of nuns, destined to become much more illustrious and to be associated, a thousand years later, with the immortal memory of Bossuet.

Radon, the second of the brothers, who had become the treasurer[1] of Dagobert, imitated the elder, and consecrated his portion of the paternal inheritance to the foundation, also upon the Marne, of another monastery, which was called, after himself, Reuil (*Radolium*).

There now remained only the third, Dadon who afterwards took the name Ouën (Audoenus) and who having become the dearest among all the lords of Dagobert and his principal confidant, received from him the office of referendary, or keeper of the seal, by which, according to the custom of the Frankish kings, all the edicts and acts of public authority were sealed. He, notwithstanding, followed the example of his brothers, and the inspiration that the blessing of Columban had left in their young hearts. He sought among the forests that then covered La Brie[2] a suitable site for the foundation that he desired to form and endow. He found it at last near a torrent called Rebais[3], a little to the south of the positions chosen by his brothers; it was a glade that was revealed to him for three successive nights by a resplendent cloud in the form of a cross.

He built a monastery there which has retained the name of the torrent, although Ouën had at first given it that of Jerusalem, as a symbol of the fraternal peace and contemplative life that he had intended should reign there. He also desired, like his brothers, to end his life

[1]Radon was treasurer to King Dagobert A. D. 632-639. (Fredegarius IV. 78.)

[2]Jonas speaks of Dadon and the foundation of Briegensis, modern La Brie, a country district east of Paris.

[3]Modern Ravoireau.

in that retreat; but neither the king nor the other lords would consent to it, and he had to remain for some time longer at the Merovingian court, until he was elected bishop (at the same time as his friend Eligius) by the unanimous consent of the clergy and people[1].

He exercised a sort of sovereignty at once spiritual and temporal throughout the whole province of Rouen; for he had obtained from the King of Neustria[2] a privilege by the terms of which neither bishop, abbot, count, nor any judge could be established there without his consent. During the forty-three years of his rule, he changed the whole aspect of his diocese, covering it with monastic foundations, one of which, situated at Rouen itself, has retained his name, consecrated to art and history by that wonderful basilica which is still the most popular monument of Normandy.

But Ouën had not left his beloved foundation of Rebais without a head worthy of presiding over its future progress[3]. He desired to choose a ruler imbued with the spirit of that great saint whose memory remained always so dear to him. He brought from Luxeuil the

[1]St. Ouën became Bishop of Rouen in A. D. 641 and died in 684. See *V. Col. M. G. H.* p. 100, note by Bruno Krusch.

Rouen was later on the capital of Normandy, and when the Normans came to Ireland (1170) they brought with them the devotion to St. Ouën. In the oldest part of Dublin (High Street) there is still (on the ruins of an earlier building) a Catholic Church of St. Audoen. Medieval records show that it was the church where several of the leading Dublin "guilds" had their foundations for chantry Masses.

After the Norman Conquest the ecclesiastical and intellectual life of England was profoundly influenced by the clerics who came in the train of William the Conqueror, who as Duke of Normandy had Rouen as his capital. If the religious traditions of Rouen owed anything to St. Columban—and history seems to prove that they did—may we not argue that post-Conquest England must be reckoned among the debtors of the great Irish missionary? See *Europe and the Faith*—Belloc, p. 192, sq.

[2]Clovis II, son of Dagobert I, King of Neustria, 638-656.

[3]Rebais was founded some years before St. Ouën became Bishop of Rouen and before the death of Dagobert in 638. He never ruled the monastery but evidently had Agilus appointed first abbot.

monk who seemed to him the best personification of the institute of Columban. It was Agilus[1], the son of that noble who had obtained the gift of Luxeuil for the Irish missionary from the Burgundian king.

Like Ouën and his brothers, Agilus had been brought as a child to receive the blessing of Columban in his father's house, and was afterwards intrusted to the saint to be educated in the monastery, where he adopted monastic life, and gained the affection and confidence of the whole community. Associated with the mission of the successor of Columban among the pagan Varasques and Bavarians[2], his fame was great in all the countries under Frankish dominion, and wherever he had been, at Metz, at Langres, and Besançon, he had excited universal admiration by his eloquence and the miraculous cures produced through his prayers. All these cities desired him for their bishop; but the monks of Luxeuil, above all, saw in him their future abbot.

To bring him forth from that cloister which was his true mother-country, a written order of Dagobert was necessary, who made him first go to Compiègne where he received him with great pomp in the midst of his court, and bestowed on him, with the consent of the bishops and lords assembled at the palace, the government of the new abbey. Twelve monks from Luxeuil entered with him, and were soon joined by a great number of nobles from the royal retinue and the surrounding country, to such an extent that Agilus had as many as eighty disciples, among whom was the young Philibert[3], who was to bear the traditions of Columban from Rebais to Jumièges. All devoted themselves to the labors of civilization and the duties of hospitality with that zeal

[1]See Chap. VII., also *V. S. Agili, Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. p. 318.
[2]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 8. *M. G. H.* IV, p. 122.
[3]See Chapter XXVI. Philibert was abbot of Rebais before he founded Jumièges and introduced there the Rule of St. Columban.

which made the new monasteries so many agricultural colonies and assured shelters for travelers in these vast provinces of Gaul, which were thus finally raised from the double ruin into which Roman oppression and barbarian invasion had thrown them.

The Irish who then flocked into Gaul on the footsteps of Columban[1], and who traversed it to carry the tribute of their ardent devotion to Rome, willingly halted at the door of the monastery where they were sure of meeting a pupil or admirer of their great countryman; and Agilus refreshed them plentifully with the good wine of the banks of the Marne, till he sometimes almost exhausted the provisions of the monastery.

But a pleasant narrative shows us his watchful charity in a still more attractive light. It was evening, a winter evening; the abbot, after having passed the day in receiving guests of an elevated rank, was going over the various offices of the monastery; when he reached the *xenodochium,* that is, the almonry or hospice, specially destined for the reception of the poor, he heard outside a feeble and plaintive voice, as of a man who wept. Through the wicket of the door, and by the half light, he saw a poor man, covered with sores, lying upon the ground and asking admittance.

Turning immediately to the monk who accompanied him, he cried, "See how we have neglected our first duty for these other cares. Make haste and have something prepared for him to eat."

Then, as he had with him all the keys of the house, which the porter took to him every evening after the stroke of compline, he opened the postern of the great door.

[1]See Gougaud's *Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity* for an account of the extraordinary influx of teachers and pilgrims from Ireland during the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries. Also Clark, *Abbey of St. Gall.*

"Come, my brother," he said, "we shall do all for thee that thou needest."

The sufferings of the leper prevented him from walking, and the abbot himself carried him in upon his shoulders and placed him upon a seat by the side of the fire. Then he hastened to seek water and linen to wash his hands; but when he returned the poor man had disappeared, leaving behind him a delicious perfume which filled the whole house, as if all the spices of the East or all the flowers of spring had distilled their odors there[1].

[1] *Vita S. Agili, Acta SS. O. S. B.* t. II, p. 323.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Burgundofara

THESE sweet expansions of charity were allied, under the influence of the Rule of Columban, to the most austere virtues, among women as well as among men. During that same journey from Neustria to Austrasia, the illustrious exile, before he reached the house of the father of St. Ouën, had visited another family connected with theirs, which dwelt near Meaux[1], and the head of which was a powerful noble called Agneric[2], whose son Chagnoald[3] had been a monk at Luxeuil from his childhood and had accompanied the holy abbot in his exile. Agneric was invested with that dignity which has been translated by the title of "companion of the king"; and this king was Theudebert, to whose court Columban was bound.

He received the glorious outlaw with joy, and desired to be his guide for the rest of the journey. But before leaving, he begged Columban to bless all his house, and presented to him on that occasion his little daughter, who is known to us only under the name of Burgundofara, which indicates at once the exalted birth and Burgundian origin of her family, meaning as it were, "the noble baroness of Burgundy." The saint gave her his blessing, but at the same time dedicated her to the Lord[4]. History says nothing about the consent of her

[1]Meaux on the Marne, northeast of Paris. The old name used by Jonas was Meldensis.

[2]"Vir nobilis Chagneric Theudeberti conviva." Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 26.

[3]Chagnoald was afterwards Bishop of Laon.

[4]"Burgundofara quae infra infantiae annis erat." This was in 610 and so Burgundofara was little more than a girl of twenty years when she became the foundress of the famous convent of Faremoutier in 625. The date given by Montalembert, 617, seems to be too early. Jonas *V. Col.* I. 26.

parents, but the noble young girl herself, when she had reached a marriageable age, considered herself bound by that engagement, and resolutely opposed the marriage which her father wished her to contract. She became ill and was at the point of death.

In the meantime, the abbot Eustace, the successor of Columban at Luxeuil, returning from Italy to give an account to Clothaire II. of the mission to his spiritual father with which the king had charged him, passed by the villa of Agneric. At sight of the dying girl, he reproached her father with having violated the engagement made with God by the saint whose blessing he had asked. Agneric promised to leave his daughter to God if she recovered. Eustace procured that recovery. But scarcely had he departed for Soissons, when the father, unfaithful to his promise, attempted again to constrain his daughter to a marriage which she resisted.

She then escaped and took refuge in the Cathedral of St. Peter. Her father's retainers followed her there, with orders to bring her away from the sanctuary, and even to threaten her with death.

"Do you believe, then," she said to them, "that I fear death? Make the trial upon the pavement of this church. Ah! how happy should I be to give my life in so just a cause to Him who has given His life for me!"

She held out until the return of Abbot Eustace, who finally delivered her from her father and obtained from him a grant of land on which Burgundofara might found the monastery of Faremoutier, which was called by her name[1].

Her example drew as many followers, among the wives and daughters of the Frankish nobility, as her cousins

[1]According to Jonas, Burgundofara received the religious habit from Bishop Gundoaldus. Bruno Krusch points out that Gundoaldus was present at the Council of Paris, 614, and at Clichi in 627. See Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 7.

had gained of their own sex for their monasteries of Rebais and Jouarre. This corner of La Brie became thus a sort of monastic province dependent upon Luxeuil. Burgundofara lived there forty years, faithfully observing the Rule of St. Columban, and maintaining it tenaciously against the perfidious suggestions of the false brother Agrestius, who attempted to engage her in his revolt against Eustace and the traditions of their common master[1].

"I will have none of thy novelties," she said to him; "and as for those whose detractor thou art, I know them, I know their virtues, I have received the doctrine of salvation from them, and I know that their instructions have opened the gates of heaven to many. Leave me quickly, and give up thy foolish thoughts."[2]

The eldest brother of Burgundofara, Chagnoald, was, as has been said, a monk at Luxeuil, and the faithful companion of Columban during his mission among the Alemannians[3]: he afterwards became bishop of Laon[4]. His other brother, who, like his sister, has only retained for posterity the name of his rank—that of Faron, or Baron—was also a bishop at Meaux, the centre of the family domains. But before he adopted the ecclesiastical state, he had distinguished himself in war, and taken a notable part in the victorious campaign of Clothaire II. against the Saxons.

He devoted his patrimony to the founding of monasteries for the reception of those Anglo-Saxons who, recently converted, began to appear among the Franks and whose daughters came in great numbers to take

[1]This occurred in the year following the Council of Mâcon, 626, at which St. Eustace refuted the false charges of Agrestius. See Chapter XIX.

[2]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 10. Also Jonas, *Vita S. Burgundofarae. Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. 439.

[3]See Chapter XI. Also Jonas, *V. Col.* I. 28.

[4]Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 8.

the veil at Faremoutier. He did the same for the Scots and Irish, for whom he had a particular regard, and in whom he doubtless honored, by a domestic tradition, the memory of their compatriot Columban[1].

Thus we find a double influence of the Irish immigrants and the colonies of Luxeuil on that portion of Frankish Gaul which has since been called *"l'Ile de France"* and Champagne. St. Fiacre, for instance, one of these Hibernians received by St. Faron, transformed the wooded glades given him by the Bishop of Meaux into gardens where he cultivated for the poor those vegetables that have procured for him down to our own day the title of "patron of gardeners."[2]

Not far from him was found another Irishman, St. Fursy, who came to seek repose as first abbot of Lagny-sur-Marne from the fatigues of a life worn out by preaching and troubled by that famous vision of heaven and hell which appeared among the numerous legends of the Middle Ages and were forerunners of the *Divina Commedia*. From this retreat he emerged with a special mission of denouncing as the principal causes of the loss of souls the negligence of pastors and the bad example of princes[3].

Moutier-la-Celle at the gates of Troyes was built upon a marshy island by Abbot Frobert, who was so simple as to arouse the laughter of his brethren at Luxeuil, but who was generous and intelligent enough to consecrate all his rich patrimony to founding the sanctuary built near his native town.

Farther off to the east we see Hautvilliers[4] and

[1] *Life of St. Faron*, written by his successor Hildegaire, Bishop of Meaux, in the ninth century. See Montalembert, *Op. Cit.* p. 592; *Acta SS. O. S. B.* t. II, p. 606 sqq.

[2] Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* t. II, p. 573. Montalembert, *Monks of the West, Op. Cit.*, p. 535. Gougaud, *Gaelic Pioneers*, pp. 17, 135.

[3] *Acta SS. O. S. B.* t. II, p. 291.

[4] *Acta SS. O. S. B.* t. II, p. 802. Montalembert, *Op. Cit.* p. 527.

Montier-en-Der, both sprung from the unwearied activity and fervent charity of Berchaire, an Aquitanian noble trained to monastic life under Walbert at Luxeuil. He became a fellow-laborer of the Metropolitan of Rheims[1] and gained for his works the generous and permanent assistance of the kings and all the high nobility of Austrasia[2].

[1]St. Nivardus (A. D. 649-671).

[2]Adson, Vita S. Bercharii, c. VII, sqq., quoted by Montalembert. The abbatial church of Montier-en-Der, existing in Montalembert's time, was one of the finest monastic churches in France.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### The Missionaries of the Somme

IT WOULD, however, be a grave error to believe that the nobility alone were called, among the Franks and Gallo-Romans, to fill up the monastic ranks and preside over the new foundations which distinguished every year of the Merovingian period. Luxeuil and its colonies furnished more than one proof to the contrary. A little shepherd of Auvergne, named Walaric, which has been softened into Valery, roused by the example of the noble children of the neighborhood who went to school, asked one of their teachers to make him out an alphabet, and found means, as he kept his father's sheep, to learn not only his letters, but the entire Psalter. From thence to the cloister the transition was easy.

But after having lived in two different monasteries, he felt himself drawn towards the great abbey from which the fame of Columban shone all over Gaul[1]. He was received there and intrusted with the care of the novice's garden. He succeeded so well in driving away the insects and worms, his vegetables were so wholesome and well-flavored, his flowers so fresh and sweet, that Columban saw in this a mark of divine favor; and as the fervent gardener carried everywhere with him the perfume of these flowers, which followed him even into the hall where the abbot explained the Scriptures, Columban, delighted, said to him one day:

"It is thou, my well-beloved, who are the true abbot and lord of this monastery[2]."

[1] *Life of St. Walaric, M. G. H.* IV, p. 161. Edited by Bruno Krusch.
[2] *Life of St. Walaric, Op. Cit.* p. 163.

After the exile of the great Celt, Valery aided the new Abbot Eustace to defend, by means of persuasion, the patrimony and buildings of the monastery against the invasions of the neighboring population. But soon the missionary fever seized him. He obtained permission from Eustace[1] to go and preach, following the example of their spiritual master, among the nations where idolatry still struggled with Christianity.

He directed his steps to the environs of Amiens, upon the shores of the Britannic sea, in that portion of Neustria where the Salian Franks had chiefly established themselves. Guided by zeal and charity, he penetrated everywhere, even to the *mals*, or judicial assizes, held, according to the custom of the Germans, by the count of the district. According to the unfailing habit of the monks and abbots of that time, he appeared there to endeavor to save the unfortunate, who were condemned, from execution.

The King of Neustria, Clothaire II., always favorable to those who came from Luxeuil, permitted him to establish himself at Leuconaüs[2], a place situated at the mouth of the Somme, where the high cliffs, bathed by the sea, seemed to the monks collected around him to be immense edifices whose summits reached the sky. He made it

[1]In the *Life of St. Walaric* this permission is said to have been granted by St. Columban. Valery was allowed to accompany Waldolenus who begged the saint's permission to preach the Gospel among the pagans along the seacoast near the mouth of the Somme. In the preceding chapter the expulsion of St. Columban from Luxeuil is related and also the service of Walaric to Columban's successor, St. Eustace. He must therefore have come to meet Columban either at Metz or Bregenz. From this it is evident that Columban had retained authority over the monks at Luxeuil. *V. Walarici*, C. 11, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 164.

[2]Afterwards called St. Valery. Founded between 617 and 620. Bishop Berchundus, who is mentioned as bishop of the diocese where Leuconaüs was founded, was present at the Council of Paris, 614. (*V. Walarici*, *M. G. H.* IV, C. 14, p. 165, note by Dr. Krusch.) The town of St. Valery-sur-Somme which sprang up around the monastery was one of the most prosperous towns on the French coast during the Middle Ages.

a sort of maritime Luxeuil. He went forth unceasingly to carry on his missionary labors, which exposed him to a thousand insults and dangers. Sometimes the idolaters, seeing the fall of their sacred oaks, threw themselves upon him with their axes and sticks, and then stopped, disarmed by his calm intrepidity!

He was of extreme gentleness[1], and softened the observance of the Rule, so far as penances were concerned, with an indulgence scarcely consistent with Celtic tradition. Yet his unpopularity lasted even after his death among a portion of the people whom he had undertaken to convert, as is proved by a little dialogue recorded by his historian. On the spot where he had cut down a tree venerated by the idolaters, at Aoust or Ault, upon the road to Eu[2], the Christian peasants raised an oratory consecrated to his memory; but the women of the old Frankish races, passing before that modest sanctuary, still testified their repugnance and scorn for the monastic apostle.

"Dear mother," said a daughter to her mother, "would these people have us to venerate the man whom we used to see going about the country mounted on an ass, and miserably clad?"

"Yes," answered the mother; "it is so; these peasants erect a temple in honor of him who did among us only vile and contemptible things[3]."

The memory of Valery, thus scorned by his contemporaries, was nevertheless to grow more and more brilliant

[1]"The little birds came frequently and ate out of his hands." *V. Walarici*, C. 27.

[2]St. Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin (1132-1180), died at the Abbey of Eu and was buried there. Following his canonization in A. D. 1220, his relics were translated to the Church of Notre Dame at Eu where they are still enshrined. The Canons of the Cathedral of Eu had a great devotion to the saint and it was largely through their efforts that the cause of his canonization was advanced.

[3]*Vita Walarici*, C. 33, *Op. Cit.* p. 173.

during the course of ages; and we see him on two solemn occasions receive the homage of the great princes who founded the two greatest monarchies of Christendom, Hugh Capet and William the Conqueror.

The inhabitants of Ponthieu (a name which from that period was borne by the country bordering the Somme, where Valery had established himself) seem to have had a decided objection to monks of the Irish school. Two of the first companions of Columban, arriving from Ireland along with him, and coming to preach in these regions, were overwhelmed with insults and ill usage[1]. At the moment when they were about to be violently expelled from the place, a noble named Riquier came to their assistance, and received them into his house. In return for his hospitality they inspired him with love for all the Christian virtues, and even for monastic life; and that conquest indemnified them for their rebuff.

Riquier became a priest and a monk, and he himself began to preach to the people who had given so bad a reception to his Irish guests. He succeeded beyond all his expectations, and made himself heard not only by the poor, whose miseries he consoled, but also by the rich and powerful, whose excesses he censured severely. The greatest nobles of the country were favorable to

[1]Their names were Caidoc and Frichor according to Alcuin, *Vita S. Richarii. Acta SS. O. S. B. II. 191.* According to our chronology this would have occurred about 574. See II, Chap. II, p. 178; IV, p. 198. The tradition is mentioned in the chronicle of St. Riquier of the eleventh century. "Fertur vero quod cum ipso (Columbano) illi (sacerdotes de Hiberniae partibus Chaydocus et Hadrianus vel Fricorus) quoque maria huc properando transmearunt. Quos ad nostra loca ferimus divertisse" —*Chonicon Centulense I. VI. Page 16. Ed. Ferdinand Lot, Paris, 1894.*

Dom Louis Gougaud, one of our leading authorities on Celtic Christian influence in western Europe, adduces this tradition as a proof that Columban landed on the coast of Gaul near the mouth of the Somme and would consequently have come there from Great Britain. The tradition, however, is that Columban's monks, but not himself, preached there. Alcuin does not mention St. Columban or the date of the arrival of the Irish monks.

him, including even the keepers of the royal forests, whose colleagues showed so much hostility to the monastic apostles on the banks of the Seine. The success of his eloquence was also a triumph for charity; he devoted the numerous alms that were brought to him to redeem captives, to relieve the lepers and other unfortunates who were attacked by contagious and disgusting diseases. After having extended his apostolic labors as far as Great Britain[1], he returned to found in his own domains at Centule[2], north of the Somme, a monastery that was afterwards to take his own name, and become one of the most notable monasteries of the Carlovingian period.

In the meantime Dagobert[3], who had succeeded his father Clothaire II, in Neustria, went to visit him in his retreat, and invited him to come and take a place at his own table, among those companions of the king who formed the highest aristocracy among the Franks. Riquier accepted without hesitation and he took advantage of these occasions to tell the king the same truths which the other Franks had received so well at his hands.

He reproved him with priestly freedom and authority, exhorted him not to pride himself on his honor or wealth, and to discourage the adulation of his courtiers; and asked him how he expected to stand at the day of judgment to answer for the many thousands of men who

[1]"In ultramarinas Britanniae regiones" is Alcuin's phrase. *Acta SS. O. S. B. II, 192.*

[2]Centule, later called St. Riquier, is a little town north of the Somme on the site of the old monastery. The abbey church is still well preserved. *Chronicon Centulense C. XV, Lib. I.*

[3]Dagobert I succeeded Clothaire II in 628 and died in 638. Montalembert gives 625 as the earliest date for the foundation of Centule. It may have been much earlier. At any rate the date is not inconsistent with the view that he first became acquainted with the Columban monks in 574. He was a layman then. Later he became a priest and missionary to the Islands of Britain we are told. *Chronicon Centulense C. X-XI: XVIII, Lib. I.* According to Mabillon, St. Riquier died in 645.

were intrusted to him, he who would have difficulty enough in rendering an account of his own soul? The young Dagobert received his instructions so well that he made the Abbot Riquier a special donation for the purpose of keeping up the lights of his church, in memory of that invisible light of Christian truth with which the voice of the monk had enlightened his soul. Despite their incessantly renewed cruelties and unchristian manners, all the Merovingian kings at least listened to the truth, and even honored those who did them the honor of speaking it to them boldly.

## CHAPTER XXX

### The Influence of Luxeuil in Belgium

AT NO great distance from Ponthieu, and still in the country occupied by the Salian Franks, but higher up towards the north, upon the confines of the two Gaulish tribes of the Atrebates and Morins, we find another Luxeuil colony, reserved for a more brilliant destiny than any of those we have yet mentioned. Audomar, since called Omer, was the son of a noble from the neighborhood of Constance, a city of Alemannia, which was subject, as has been already said, to the Austrasian royalty. Perhaps, in passing through this country, Columban had already instructed and won him; history gives us no information on this point, but proves that a little after the sojourn of the Irish apostle upon the banks of the Lake of Constance, the young Omer presented himself at Luxeuil, bringing his father with him, a combination very rare in monastic annals.

Abbot Eustace admitted both among the number of his monks. The father remained there until the end of his life; the son left Luxeuil twenty years after[1] to become bishop of Therouanne; he had been suggested as the choice of Dagobert and the Frankish nobles by the bishop of Laon[2], himself formerly a monk of Luxeuil. The country of the Morins, of which Therouanne was the capital, had been in vain evangelized by martyrs, from the first introduction of the faith into Gaul: it had fallen back into idolatry; the few Christians who had

[1]Before A. D. 638, the year Dagobert died, and twenty years after he entered Luxeuil in Eustace's time. This would make 635-637 the most probable date for the consecration of Bishop Omer.

[2]Chagnoald. See Chapter XXVIII.

been trained there, since the conquest and conversion of Clovis, were overwhelmed with gross superstitions.

The new bishop perceived that he needed assistance to accomplish such a task. Some years after his consecration, he begged Abbot Walbert of Luxeuil to send him three of his former brethren[1], who had, like himself, come to Luxeuil from the banks of Lake Constance. He installed them in an estate situated on the banks of the Aa and called Sithiu, which he had just received as a gift from a rich and powerful pagan noble whom he had baptized with all his family. This estate was a sort of island amid a vast marsh, which could scarcely be approached, save in a boat.

There rose, at the same time, the celebrated abbey which at a later period took the name of St. Bertin, after the youngest of the three monks sent from Luxeuil, and upon a neighboring height a little church, which has become the cathedral of the episcopal town and is still known by the name of the apostle of Morinia[2]. His body was deposited there after thirty years of apostolic labors and heroic charity, which changed the aspect of the entire province. It is around the cemetery intended for the reception of the monks of St. Bertin that the existing town of St. Omer has been formed[3].

Bertin, the countryman and relative of Omer, vied with him in his zeal for preaching and the conversion of

[1]Their names were Bertin, after whom the abbey was named, Mommelin, its first abbot and afterwards bishop of Noyon, and Ebertran, afterwards abbot of St. Quentin.

[2]Similarly the Abbey of Fontenelle was afterwards called St. Vandrille after its founder, Leuconaüs became St. Valery, and Centule, St. Riquier.

[3]St. Omer became a famous educational center during the penal days in Ireland and England. Students flocked there to prepare for the priesthood, often to return to certain martyrdom in their own countries. Bishop Carroll, the first bishop in the United States, was educated at St. Omer and afterwards became a professor there. Campbell's *History of the Jesuits*, p. 595.

the diocese that had adopted him. The Rule of St. Columban and the customs of Luxeuil[1] were observed in his monastery, where there were now two hundred monks, living lives of the utmost austerity. He exercised, like Columban himself, an irresistible influence over the nobles who surrounded him. Aided by their gifts, and the unwearied diligence of his monks, he at last succeeded, by successive elevations of the soil, in transforming the vast marsh, in which he had established himself, into a fertile plain.

When he gave up the dignity of abbot, which he had held for fifty years, in order, according to the custom of most of the holy founders of those days, to prepare himself better for death, the great monastery which has immortalized his name, and produced twenty-two saints venerated by the Church, had attained the heights of its moral and material prosperity[2]. Of all the swarms from the inexhaustible hive of Luxeuil, none were more productive or brilliant than that with which these four Alemannians, brought from the frontiers of Helvetia to the shores of the North Sea, enriched the wild Morinian country. The heirs of Columban found themselves thus established upon the soil of Belgium[3], the Christian conquest of which they had partly to accomplish over again, and partly to begin. A noble place was reserved for them in this work, in which they were careful not to fail.

[1] *Vita S. Bertini C. I. Acta SS. O. S. B. Op. Cit. p. 108*—"Monachum in Luxoviensi coenobio sub patre Eustacio professus est."

[2] c. A. D. 690.

[3] The town of St. Omer is now in French territory, but not far from the Belgian frontier.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### The Saints of Remiremont

THE necessities of our narrative have led us far from Luxeuil to seek her distant colonies or scions: we must now return to her neighborhod to point out the house that was perhaps the most illustrious of her daughters. Let us then re-enter that southern cluster of the Vosges which marks the boundaries of Austrasia and Burgundy, and where rise, not far from each other, the Moselle and the Meurthe, the Meuse and the Saône.

Upon a mountain whose side is bathed by the clear and limpid waters of the Moselle, very near its source, amid forests which, a century ago, were still inhabited by bears, and at a distance of some leagues north from Luxeuil, rose a castle belonging to the noble Romaric. This wealthy lord had seen his property confiscated and his father slain during the fratricidal struggle between the two grandsons of Brunechildis, Theudebert and Theuderic[1], but after the death of the latter he had recovered his vast patrimony and occupied a high position at the court of Clothaire II, then sole master of the three Frankish kingdoms.

While living as a layman, this nobleman already practiced all the virtues. When God willed, as the contemporary narrator tells, to recompense his knight for the valor which he had displayed in the struggles with the world, and to conduct him to the fields of celestial light, Amatus, a monk of Luxeuil, noble like himself, but of Roman race, came to preach in Austrasia[2]. This

[1] A. D. 612-613.
[2] *V. S. Amati,* C. II, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* t. II, p. 132.

Amatus, or Amé, had been almost from his cradle offered by his father to the monastery of Agaune, which, situated near the source of the Rhine, attracted the veneration and confidence of all the faithful of the provinces bordering that river.

He had lived thirty years either at Agaune itself or in an isolated cell upon the top of a rock, which still overhangs the celebrated monastery, as if about to crush it. There this noble Gallo-Roman, always barefooted and clad in a sheep's skin, lived upon water and barley-bread alone; the water gushing from a limpid fountain, which he had obtained by his prayers, was received in a little basin that he had hollowed and covered with lead; the barley was the produce of a little field nearby. He cultivated it with his own hands, and ground the grain by turning a millstone with his arms, like the slaves of antiquity. This fatiguing labor was to him a preservative against sleep and the temptations of the flesh. Abbot Eustace of Luxeuil, returning from Lombardy after his fruitless mission to Columban[1], stopped at Agaune and determined Amatus on following him to Luxeuil. The gentleness of the anchorite, his eloquence, and even the noble and serene beauty of his features, won all hearts[2].

Amatus was nominated by the monks of Luxeuil, on account of his eloquence, to bear the word of God into the Austrasian cities. Romaric received him at his table, and during the repast, inquired of him the best way of working out his salvation.

"Thou seest this silver dish," said the monk; "how many masters, or rather slaves, has it already had, and how many more shall it have still? And thou, whether

[1]A. D. 614. See Chapter XIV; *Vita S. Amati—Acta SS. O. S. B. II. p. 131.*

[2]*V. S. Amati, Ibid.*

thou wilt or not, thou art its serf; for thou possessest it only to preserve it. But an account will be demanded of thee; for it is written, 'Your silver and gold shall rust, and that rust shall bear witness against you.'

"I am astonished that a man of great birth, very rich, and intelligent like thyself, should not remember the answer of the Saviour to him who asked him how he should attain eternal life; 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and follow me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' "

From that moment Romaric was vanquished by the love of God and the desire of Heaven. He distributed all his lands to the poor, with the exception of his castle of Habend, freed a multitude of serfs of both sexes, and went to Luxeuil, taking with him all that remained of his wealth, to become a monk. When he presented himself to the abbot to have his hair cut, according to the rite of admission into the order, several of the serfs whom he had liberated appeared at the monastery for the same purpose. He gladly recognized his old servants, not only as brethren, but as superiors; for he sought the lowest occupations in the monastery, and surpassed all the brethren in his care for the cultivation of the gardens, where he learned the Psalter by heart as he labored[1].

After some years' residence there, during which time his friendship with Amatus became intimate and affectionate, the two friends left Luxeuil, where, for some unknown reason, they had incurred the displeasure of Abbot Eustace. With his consent, however, they went together to the estate which Romaric had reserved to himself[2]. The *Castrum Habendi,* as it was called, had

[1] *Vita S. Romarici, Acta SS. O. S. B.* Vol. II, 417 sq.
[2] c. A. D. 620.

been once a Roman fortress; the remains of a temple, statues, and some tombs, were still visible, as at Luxeuil, upon the height of a steep hill, which was situated between two valleys, and the foot of which was watered by two tributaries of the Moselle. They built a church there, placed as many as seven chapels upon the sides of the hill, and afterwards founded there the greatest convent for nuns that had been seen in Gaul. Amatus took the government of it, but soon devolved it upon Romaric, and the house was called, after the latter, Remiremont[1].

In this celebrated abbey, which was immediately put under the Rule of St. Columban by its two founders, everything was established on a magnificent scale, owing to the influx of the nuns and the liberality of the Austrasian kings and nobles[2]. Clothaire II gave, at one time, the enormous sum of two hundred pieces of gold to the foundation of his former lord. Remiremont soon became for women what Luxeuil already was for men. The number of nuns permitted the *Laus perennis* to be organized by means of seven choirs, who alternately sang the praises of God in seven different churches or chapels. The fervor and regularity of all these nuns procured to the site occupied by their community the name of the Holy Mount, which it retained for some centuries.

The monastery of men, also placed under the Rule of Columban by its two founders, was not on that account any less unfavorable to the spirit of the Irish Rule. When Agrestius attempted to organize among the numerous disciples of Columban an insurrection against the

[1]The modern village of Remiremont stands on the site of the old monastery famous through the Middle Ages. The abbess of Remiremont ranked as a princess of the Holy Roman Empire from the time of Rudolph Hapsburg. Montalembert, *Monks of the West, Op. Cit.* p. 632.

[2]Remiremont is in the vicinity of Luxeuil, near the traditional boundaries of Austrasia and Burgundy.

traditions of their master and the discipline of Luxeuil, he fell back upon Remiremont after he had been overcome by Eustace at the Council of Mâcon and repulsed by Burgundofara at Faremoutier[1]. He was well received by Amatus and Romaric, who were already biased against the abbot of Luxeuil, and still better by their monks, who showed themselves unanimous in their repugnance to the institutions of Columban[2]. Fatal and numerous accidents, of which more than fifty of the religious were victims, some torn by mad wolves or struck by lightning, others urged to suicide or violent deaths, were necessary to lead them back. All these misfortunes, happening in such rapid succession, appeared to be warnings from on high, and the disgraceful death of Agrestius himself opened their eyes completely. Amatus and Romaric returned into communion with Eustace.

Amatus condemned himself to make a public confession before his death, no doubt in recollection of his weakness towards the schismatic Agrestius and of his struggles against his abbot at Luxeuil[3].

As a penance he retired into a grotto, closed up by a projecting rock, so low and so narrow that it could scarcely contain him. As in the case of St. Benedict at Subiaco[4], a monk lowered down to him, by a cord from the top of the rock, the morsel of bread and glass of water on which he lived. This severe penance was not enough for him. When he was dying, upon a bed of ashes, he had the letter of the Pope St. Leo to St. Flavian, which contains a clear and complete exposition of

[1]A. D. 626. See Chap. XIX; *V. Col.* II. 10.
[2]Jonas, *Vita Eustacii*, C. 13-15.
[3]*V. S. Amati*, C. 21-23, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II. p. 134.
[4]Subiaco, fifty miles west of Rome near the River Anio, where St. Benedict as a youth established his retreat, c. 494. Montalembert, Chapter on St. Benedict, *Monks of the West*, *Op. Cit.* p. 308.

Catholic doctrine upon the Trinity and Incarnation, read to him, as a last and solemn protest against every germ of schism[5].

[5]627 A. D., the traditional date given for the death of St. Amatus, can scarcely be correct. It must have been some time after the schism of Agrestius which ended with his death in 627. Romaric died in 653 according to Mabillon. They were buried side by side—*Vita Romarici, Acta SS. O. S. B. II. 420.*

## CHAPTER XXXII

### Fusion of Two Great Spirits

TO complete this rapid glance over the extension of the great institute of Columban in Frankish Gaul in the seventh century, it has yet to be shown how, after having spread through both the Burgundies and Austrasia, and gaining Armorica, where the British Celts naturally adopted with cordiality the work of the Irish Celt, it extended over Neustria, beyond the Loire, and as far as Aquitaine. For that purpose the foundation of Solignac, in Limousin, by St. Eligius[1], must be specially mentioned. It took place soon after the Council of Mâcon[2].

Its illustrious founder, who had visited the principal monasteries in Gaul and had perceived that monastic order was nowhere else observed as it was in Luxeuil, declared his desire to conform it absolutely to the plan and rule of the model abbey which he found in the Vosges, and to which he placed it in direct subordination. But this great man belongs still more to the history of France than to that of the Rule of Luxeuil. With him we touch upon a new phase of the Merovingian royalty, as with the apostles of Morinia we are brought into con-

[1]St. Eligius, afterwards Bishop of Noyon, a friend of Eustace and Jonas, was a layman when he founded Solignac. He became bishop probably in 641, according to Bruno Krusch. Jonas, *V. Col.* II. 10, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 128. Note.

[2]The schism of Agrestius seems to have given the bishops of Gaul a better understanding of the spirit of St. Columban.

tact with the conversion of Belgium, and with the founder of Remiremont approach the accession and preponderance of the Pepins[1]. New scenes open before us. To enter them, we must leave Luxeuil and Columban, of whom, however, we shall find elsewhere many a luminous and important trace.

But before closing, it is necessary to indicate a sequence as unforeseen as it is undeniable. It would seem that everything in the history we have just related should have secured the lasting preponderance of the Rule and institute of Columban in the countries governed by the Franks. A popularity so great and legitimate, the constant favor of the Merovingian kings, the generous sympathy of the Burgundian and Austrasian nobility, the virtues and miracles of so many saints, the immense and perpetually renewed ramifications of Luxeuil and its offspring, all should have contributed to establish the ascendency of a monastic law originated upon the soil of Gaul, and extended by representatives so illustrious—all ought to have procured it a preference over that Italian Rule, which was older, it is true, but the modest beginnings and obscure progress of which in Gaul have escaped the notice of history.

This, however, did not happen. On the contrary, the Rule of Columban was gradually eclipsed, and the Rule of Benedict was introduced and triumphed everywhere, while still we cannot cite a single man above the ordinary mark, a single celebrated saint, who could have contributed to that surprising victory, by his personal in-

[1]St. Arnulf, Bishop of Metz, who with Pepin of Landen founded the Carlovingian line, spent his last years as a monk at Remiremont after he resigned his see.

fluence, throughout the whole period that we have surveyed[1].

This victory was complete half a century after the death of the founder of Luxeuil, and amid the daily successes and increasing popularity of his disciples[2]. Among those disciples themselves, some of the first and nearest to his heart, such as his godson Donatus, had begun to combine the Benedictine precepts with his. The two monasteries which he had himself originated and dwelt in, Luxeuil and Bobbio, under his own immediate successors, suffered or accepted its sway, and extended it through their colonies. The illustrious Eligius, while he formed his Limousin foundation in exact imitation of Luxeuil, took care to specify in its charter that the monks were to follow at the same time the Rules of both

[1]The introduction of the Benedictine Rule arose naturally because it filled a need in monastic organization which the Columban Rule did not meet. It was more definite and more thorough than St. Columban's and not quite so strict, a feature that was probably appreciated after the first fervor of the monastic age had grown somewhat colder.

[2]We may distinguish four periods or phases in the transition from the Columban to the Benedictine Rule.

1. A. D. 628-674. The transition began soon after the Council of Mâcon, 628, and for fifty years the Rule of St. Benedict was followed "ad modum Luxoviensis Monasterii quod S. Columbanus tenuit." *Acta SS. O. S. B.* Mabillon, Preface vii.

2. A. D. 674-742. At the Council of Autun, 674, the Rule of St. Benedict is expressly prescribed for France and there is no mention of St. Columban.

3. A. D. 742-817. The Benedictine Rule is favored by the Bishops of Germany. In 817 the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle at the request of Louis the Pious made the Benedictine Rule obligatory on all the monasteries in the Carlovingian dominions.

4. A. D. 817-1088. During this period the Benedictine Rule is universal. In 1088 St. Robert effected a reform and founded Citeaux. The Cistercian observance was intended as a return to the primitive observance of the Rule of St. Benedict, as for instance it was observed at Luxeuil and its branches. This reform is the inheritance of the Trappists of our own day. Cf. Mabillon. Preface *Acta SS. O. S. B.*

the blessed fathers Benedict and Columban. The same stipulation is found of more and more frequent recurrence in deciding what order was to be adopted in the colonies of Luxeuil.

In this great monastic enlistment, which was carried on among the flower of the Gallo-Frank population during the whole of the seventh century, it was Columban who raised the recruits and set them out on the march; but it was Benedict who disciplined them, and gave them the flag and the watchword. Where Columban sowed, it was Benedict who reaped. The Benedictine Rule was gradually and everywhere placed side by side with that of Columban, then substituted for his, until at length the latter dwindled further and further into distance, like an antique and respectable memory, from which life had ebbed away[1].

At Autun, in 670[2], in the heart of that Burgundy of which Columban seemed destined to be the monastic legislator, in a council of fifty-four bishops, held by St. Leger, who had himself lived at Luxeuil, six canons were given forth relating exclusively to monastic discipline. In these the observation and complete fulfillment of the precepts of the canons of the Church and the Rule of St. Benedict are strictly enjoined upon all the religious. The Council adds: "If these are legitimately and fully observed by the abbots and monasteries, the number of the monks will always increase by the grace of God, and the whole world will be saved from the contagion of sin by their incessant prayers." The Gallo-Frank Church

[1]An inscription around the ancient *baldachino* over Columban's shrine at Bobbio carried the inscription: "S. Columbanus Hibernensis Domini Benedicti discipulus et sectator."—*Six months in the Apennines* —Stokes, p. 106.

[2]The date is not certain. Mabillon is inclined to place it at 674.

thus proclaimed its unqualified adhesion to the Rule which St. Maur had brought from Latium a hundred and twenty years before. The great Irish monk had scarcely been fifty years dead, and already no mention is made either of his Rule or his person.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### The Inheritance of St. Benedict

HOW can we explain this complete and universal substitution of Benedictine influence for that of the Hibernian legislator, even in his own foundations; and that, we repeat, without the appearance of any mind of the highest stamp exclusively devoted to the traditions of Monte Cassino? Must it be attributed to the individual and national spirit, from which Columban either could not or would not completely separate himself? Was this the hidden vice that consumed the vitality of his work? Certainly not; for if this powerful personality had inspired the least dislike, he could not have attracted, during his life or after his death, that myriad of disciples, more numerous and especially more illustrious, than all those of Benedict.

We must then seek the reason of his apparent failure elsewhere, and it is to be found, in our opinion, in the much closer and more intimate union of the Benedictine Rule with the authority of the Roman See. We have proved that neither in Columban nor among his disciples, was there any hostility to the Holy See, and we have quoted proofs of the respect of the Popes for his memory. Nor had Benedict, any more than Columban, either sought or obtained during his lifetime the sovereign sanction of the Papacy for his institution. But long after his death, and at the very time when Columban was busied in planting his work in Gaul, the saint and the man of genius who occupied the chair of St. Peter,

Gregory the Great, had spontaneously impressed the seal of supreme approbation upon the Benedictine Rule[1].

The third successor of Gregory, Boniface IV, in a council held at Rome in 610, and in a famous decree had condemned those who, moved more by jealousy than charity, held that the monks, being dead to the world and living only for God, were by that reason rendered unworthy and incapable of exercising the priesthood and administering the Sacraments.

The decree of this Council recognizes the power of binding and loosing in monks lawfully ordained, and, to confound the foolish assumptions of their adversaries, quotes the example of St. Gregory the Great, who had not been kept back from the Supreme See by his monastic profession, and of many others who under the monastic habit had already worn the pontifical ring. But it especially appeals to the authority of Benedict, whom it describes as "the venerable legislator of the monks," and who had interdicted them only from interference in secular affairs. It proclaims anew, and in the most solemn manner, that the Rule of Benedict was the supreme monastic law[2]. It impresses a new sanction upon all the prescriptions of him whom another pope, John IV, the same who exempted Luxeuil from episcopal authority, called, thirty years later, "the abbot of the city of Rome."

Thus adopted and honored by the Papacy, and identified in a sense with the authority of Rome itself, the influence of the Rule of St. Benedict progressed with the

[1]St. Gregory the Great was himself a Benedictine monk of the Monastery of St. Andrea in Rome before he became pope. St. Augustine to whom he intrusted the mission to England in 595 A. D., was also a Benedictine monk from the same monastery.

[2]A. D. 610, the year St. Columban was driven from Luxeuil by King Theuderic.

progress of the Roman Church. I am aware that up to the seventh century, the intervention of the Popes in the affairs of the Church in France was much less sought and less efficacious than in after ages; but it was already undoubtedly sovereign, and more than sufficient to win the assent of all to a specially Roman institution.

Without weakening the foregoing argument, another explanation might be admitted for the strange course of things which, in the space of a single century, eclipsed the Rule and name of Columban, and changed into Benedictine monasteries all the foundations due to the powerful missionary impulse of the Irish Apostle. The cause that produced in Western Christendom the supremacy of St. Benedict's institute over that of his illustrious rival, was most likely the same that made the Rule of St. Basil prevail over all the other monastic Rules of the East—namely, its moderation, its prudence, and the more liberal spirit of its government. When the two codes of Monte Cassino and of Luxeuil met, it must have been manifest that the latter exceeded the natural strength of man, in its regulations relating to prayer, to food, and to penal discipline, and, above all, in its mode of government. St. Benedict had conquered by the strength of practical sense, which, in the end, always wins the day[1].

One of those great rivers, that, like the Moselle or the Saône, have their source near Luxeuil itself, offers a meet symbol of the fate that awaited the work of St

[1]Yet Columban's immediate successors who adopted the Rule of St. Benedict retained the more severe penitential portions of the Columban Rule. The Benedictine Rule itself had made little progress until it received its spirit from Luxeuil, "ad modum Luxoviensis monasterii." So that it was really the spirit of St. Columban that gave the Rule of St. Benedict and the monasticism of that period the vigor which it retained for more than four hundred years during the formative period of the Christian civilization of Europe.

Columban. We see it first springing up, obscure and unknown, from the foot of the hills; we see it then increasing, extending, growing into a broad and fertilizing current, watering and flowing through vast and numerous provinces. We expect it to continue indefinitely its independent and beneficent course. But, vain delusion! Lo, another stream comes pouring onward from the other extremity of the horizon, to attract and to absorb its rival, to draw it along, to swallow up even its name, and, replenishing its own strength and life by these captive waters, to pursue, alone and victorious, its majestic course towards the ocean. Thus did the current of Columban's triumphant institution sink into the forgotten tributary of that great Benedictine stream, which henceforward flowed forth alone to cover Gaul and all the West with its regenerating tide.

SAINT COLUMBAN

# II. CRITICA

## A Study of the *Columbiana*

# I

## THE COLUMBIANA

ST. COLUMBAN'S greatness consists not so much in the establishment of any permanent organization as in the fact that he enkindled a new spirit in the monasticism of Europe, and this in time became the guiding influence in European culture and civilization. More than a hundred years before St. Columban was born, the monasticism of the East had gained a foothold in Gaul[1], greatly modified, however, to suit the genius of the West. In the middle of the century in which he lived, the Benedictine influence from Italy found its way thither, but it was not until Columban's time and in the monasteries he founded that the new monasticism of the West began to blossom forth in all its beauty[2]. Luxeuil, which knew and loved his spirit best, became the model as well as the mother of monasteries, so that in many of the charters of the new foundations that sprang up within fifty years after Columban's death, it was expressly laid down that the monastic rule should be observed as it was observed in Luxeuil[3]. This spirit which Columban inspired is best reflected in the writings that have come down to us under his name, and a brief enumeration of them here will help us to appreciate more fully his life and influence. We give only those which we regard as unquestionably authentic.

[1] Montalembert, *Monks of the West,* Book III.

[2] *Op. Cit.,* Book VII, p. 638.

[3] "Ad modum Luxoviensis monasterii quod S. Columbanus tenuit," is the phrase used by the Bishop of Soissons in the charter to a monastery of the Blessed Virgin in his diocese. Other charters use similar expressions. Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.,* Introduction, p. 5.

## I. Ascetical Writings

1. *Regula Monachorum*[1]. This consists of ten chapters, outlining the perfection of life that his monks should strive to attain. Except in the seventh chapter, which deals with the recitation of the Divine Office, it contains no definite prescriptions of rule, but rather principles of the spiritual life concerning obedience, silence, temperance, poverty, wordliness, chastity, prayer, discretion, mortification and spiritual perfection.

2. *Regula Coenobialis*[2]. This is really the monastic Rule of St. Columban. It prescribes actual observances for his monks and lays down prohibitions and penalties for the violation of monastic discipline. This Rule is considered so severe by all modern biographers of St. Columban that it has given rise to an idea of harshness in the saint which other facts that we know about his character do not justify. In the old manuscripts the *Regula Coenobialis* was combined with what is now known as the *Penitential,* or catalogue of sins, intended as a guide for confessors[3]. The opening paragraph of the *Regula* enjoins frequent confession for his monks, though not necessarily sacramental confession, and points out that different faults should be healed by the medicine of appropriate penance[4]. The Rule itself specifies the penance to be imposed according to the fault or breach of discipline, such as the use of the discipline, humiliations, fasting, silence and solitary confinement.

[1]Edited by Dr. Otto Seebass in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XV, 1895. It is also to be found in Migne's Patrology, Vol. 80.

[2]Edited by Seebass, *Op. Cit.* XVII, 1896. Also Migne's Patrology, Vol. 80.

[3]Dr. Seebass separates the *Regula Coenobialis,* the real Columban Rule for his monks, from the *Penitential,* which was intended for lay people.

[4]"Diversitas culparum diversitatis penitentiae medicamento sanari debet." *Reg. Coen.,* Seebass I.

We must not assume that these penalties were frequently imposed, because this would imply a frequent violation of Rule. Columban taught his monks to serve God and be perfect from motives of love rather than fear. The very first lines of his Rule emphasize the love of God above all things[1], and so we might reasonably suppose that these penalties were rarely imposed by the "soul-friends" at Luxeuil, as the Irish monks loved to call their confessors. It was no easy matter to mould the children of a wild and lawless race into saints, and the necessity of severe discipline was seen not only by Columban but by his successors and others of his generation who laid the foundation of the golden age of monasticism in France. Even where the milder rule of St. Benedict was introduced after Columban's death, the more severe features of the Columban Rule were also retained[2].

The fact that the penalties recur so frequently after each paragraph and sometimes after each sentence gives the impression of excessive severity, but this was necessary to make the Rule easily memorized in days when manuscripts were scarce. It was not quite so severe as modern writers would have us believe. The true spirit of any Rule is shown principally in its application, and under the guidance of a man like Columban it would naturally be tempered by gentleness and affection. It is not necessary to suppose that the penalties were imposed

[1] "Primo omnium docemur Deum diligere ex toto corde et ex tota mente et ex totis viribus et proximum tanquam nosmetipsos, deinde opera." *Reg. Monachorum,* Seebass.

[2] The Charter of Corbie, e. g., lays down the following prescription: "Ut ipsi monachi sub regula S. Benedicti vel S. Columbani conversari et vivere debeant." *Acta SS. O. S. B.,* Introduction, v.

by the abbot himself or in public[1], but rather in private as any other penance might be imposed and performed. This consideration removes from the penalties of the *Regula Coenobialis* a great deal of their severity. Besides, we must remember that the use of the discipline enjoined by Columban is by no means a thing of the past for those who are striving after perfection in the spiritual life[2].

3. The *Penitential*[3] is a catalogue of sins and the appropriate penances that should be imposed by confessors. In the early Irish monasteries, as now, the confessor played an important part in the lives of the faithful. The people loved to call him *"anam-chara"* or "soul friend." In the absence of moral theologies as we have them today, the Irish bishops and theologians compiled their penitentials as guides by which confessors could judge the gravity of sins and impose penances accordingly. The custom of public penance which was so common in the early Church in Europe does not seem to have ever been practiced in Ireland. The best authorities, including Seebass, agree that Columban was the first to introduce the penitential into Gaul and that the Frankish penitentials, afterwards so common, are derived from it[4].

[1]The use of the discipline was always self-inflicted. Only once in the *Acta SS. O. S. B.* is it related to have been inflicted by another and that in the life of St. Pardulf, Abbot of Warrick, who ordered his disciple to beat his body with rods. This is mentioned as one of his extraordinary austerities. *Acta SS. O. S. B.* III, p. 575.

[2]The following is taken from the Manual of a certain present-day religious order: "The discipline. For this penance we use an instrument commonly called the discipline. It consists of a lash of five small loose cords, each with five knots. The discipline is taken on the shoulders. This penance is performed in the dormitory every Friday of the year immediately after the night office during the space of a *Miserere.*"

[3]Seebass, *Op. Cit.* XIV, 1893. Also Migne's *Patrology,* Vol. 80.

[4]For an interesting discussion on the *Penitential,* see Mrs. Concannon's *Life of St. Columban,* p. 301.

The *Penitential* of St. Columban is itself based on that of St. Finnian of Moville, the same whose psalter St. Columcille, Abbot of Iona, furtively copied, an action that caused so much bloodshed among the clans of Ulster[1]. Finnian died in 589. He was Bishop of Moville, a few miles from Bangor, probably at the time Columban was a monk there[2]. It is not unlikely that he used the penitential as a confessor at Bangor and afterwards brought it with him to France. The original penitential of St. Finnian has been preserved for us and in many of its canons bears a striking resemblance to that of St. Columban[3].

The Columban authorship of the *Penitential* has been contested by a few scholars, but their contentions have found very little support. The weight of evidence on the side of its authenticity is so great as to place it beyond reasonable doubt.

4. The *Instructiones* or Homilies which are found in Migne, Vol. 80, taken from the *Collectanea Sacra* of Fleming, have been seriously questioned by Seebass[4]. They were found by Fleming under Columban's name in a Bobbio manuscript which some authorities maintain is the same as an eleventh century manuscript at present in the Library of Turin. In a St. Gall catalogue of the ninth century the *Instructiones* are definitely attributed to St. Columban. As published by Migne they are seventeen in number, but one of them, *Instructio XIV*, really

[1]Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 251.

[2]According to Archbishop Healy, the monastery of Moville was founded about 540. *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 249. Ughelli in his *Italia Sacra* identifies Finnian with St. Frigidian, who died as Bishop of Lucca in Italy.

[3]Still extant and published by Wasserschleben at Halle in 1851 from manuscripts in the libraries of St. Gall, Paris and Vienna.

[2]Seebass, *Über die sogen. Instructiones Columbani, Op Cit.* XIII, 1893.

belongs to the *Litteræ Columbani.* Seebass has used the letters and other works of Columban, of which his authorship is beyond question, to disprove the authenticity of the Homilies from internal evidence. As a result we have to abandon all claim to these *Instructiones* published by Fleming and Migne, except III, XI, XVI and XVII, as follows:

a. *De Sectando Mundi*[1], in which St. Columban points out the wisdom of following heavenly things rather than things of the world and emphasizes the blindness and folly of placing our treasure here below.

b. *De Dilectione Dei*[2] is an exposition of the excellence of the virtue of charity toward God and our neighbor. Seebass points out a striking similarity of phrases between these two homilies and other writings of St. Columban that are admittedly authentic.

c. *Quid Est?*[1] This is a short homily on the destiny of man. At the end of the last paragraph it contains a recapitulation of eight deadly sins that agrees with Columban's enumeration of these vices in the *Regula Monachorum,* Chapter VIII, and with the following homily, *De Octo Vitiis.*

d. *De Octo Vitiis*[4]. This is admitted by Seebass as unquestionably the work of Columban, partly because of his enumeration of eight capital sins instead of seven, and partly from other internal evidence. Both are found in a Fleury manuscript of the eleventh century, together with *De Sectando Mundi* and *De Dilectione Dei.*

The reason which impels Dr. Seebass to reject the other homilies is found in a reference to a certain

[1]Published in Migne's *Patrology,* Vol. 80, col. 235, *as Instructio III.*
[2]Migne, Vol. 80, col. 250, as *Instructio XI.*
[3]Migne, Vol. 80, Col. 258, as *Instructio XVI.*
[4]Migne, Vol. 80, Col. 259, as *Instructio XVII.*

Faustus[1] who is quoted as a teacher of the author in *Instructio II* of the original group. Father Fleming surmises that Faustus might be identified with St. Comgall, Abbot of Bangor, but Seebass claims to have found the actual quotation in a work of Faustus, Abbot of Lérins, and afterwards Bishop of Reitz, A.D. 400-485[2]. From internal evidence, Seebass shows that all the other *Instructiones,* except the four above mentioned, were written by the same author[3]. Seebass supposes that the combination of these homilies with those of St. Columban was made at some Gallo-Burgundian monastery because of the similarity of thought running through them. Why may we not suppose that they were combined by Columban himself for the use of his monks, that they embody his spirit and part at least of his ascetical teaching and for this reason have come down to us under his name?

## II. Prose Letters

The authentic prose letters that have been attributed to St. Columban in various manuscripts are six in number and have been best edited by Dr. Wilhelm Gundlach, well-known German historian and authority on paleography[4].

1. *Gratia Tibi.* St. Columban's letter to Pope St. Gregory the Great[5] on the Easter Controversy. The early Irish Church used a calendar reckoning, probably introduced by St. Patrick, which made it possible to

[1]Migne's *Patrology,* Vol. 80, Col. 233.

[2]Seebass writes: "The sermon, 'si quando terrae operarius,' to which the extract mentioned in *Instructio II* belongs is ascribed to Faustus in the *Holstenius Codex Regularum* I, 475, (1753) on the authority of the Fleury manuscripts, and Reifferscheid has confirmed this." *Op. Cit.* IV., p. 520-521.

[3]Hauck attributes the other thirteen to Columban the Younger.

[4]*Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* Vol. III, Hanover, 1892.

[5]A. D. 590-604.

celebrate Easter occasionally on the same day as the Jews celebrated the Passover. The Council of Nicaea, 325, had issued a decree that Easter should never be celebrated on the same day as the Jews, because this was a custom at the time of an heretical sect known as the *Quartodecimans*[1]. The Cycle of Victorius of Aquitaine, introduced into Gaul in 427, did not coincide with the Celtic reckoning which Columban followed at Luxeuil and, what was still more troublesome, in the years A.D. 600 and 603 the celebration of Easter Sunday at Luxeuil coincided with the Jewish Passover.

The Bishops of Gaul, who, as might be expected, never looked with favor on St. Columban's adherence to Irish customs, interfered and accused Columban, to use his own expression, of "keeping Easter with the Jews," which was tantamount to an accusation of heresy, seeing that the Council of Nicaea had condemned the Quartodecimans for a similar practice. Columban first brought the matter before Candidus who at the time was a Papal Legate at the court of Burgundy, but Candidus refused to decide[2]. Columban then appealed to Pope St. Gregory. The letter was written very probably after Easter, 600 A.D., when the bishops would have been likely to bring forward the accusation that he kept Easter with the Jews[3].

2. *Gratias Ago Deo.* A letter to the Bishops of Burgundy, as Gundlach thinks, asembled at the Council of

[1]*Metlake, Life of St. Columban,* p. 128; Concannon, *Life of St. Columban,* p. 173.

[2]*Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* III, p. 160.

[3]"The opinion of these bishops who say we ought not to keep Easter with the Jews does not convince me after the other great authorities I have read." *Op. Cit.* p. 157.

Chalons-sur-Saône, A. D. 602-3[1]. At this Council, St. Desiderius, Bishop of Vienne, was unjustly accused of a shameful crime and afterwards stoned to death, apparently at the instigation of Queen Brunechildis, grandmother of the king[2]. The Council of Chalons was held, according to Fredegarius[3], in the eighth year of the reign of Theuderic. Since his father, Childebert, died in A.D. 596 and was succeeded immediately by his two sons, Theudebert and Theuderic, the actual date of the council was very probably 603 A.D.[4]. It would be easy enough to identify the synod to which Columban writes with the Council of Chalons if we assume that the latter was held after Easter of that year, which is not unlikely. It would give the bishops an opportunity of again bringing up a formal accusation of heresy against Columban inasmuch as "he had kept Easter with the Jews," because according to the calendar used in the Gallic Church in that year, 603, Columban celebrated Easter at Luxeuil on the same day as the Jews celebrated the Passover. This made him liable to the charge of being a Quartodeciman and of acting contrary to the canons of the Council of Nicaea, which of course Columban had no intention of doing. The Fathers at Nicaea intended to condemn a definite heretical sect and their decision in this particular matter was not intended to apply to the universal Church.

Columban, in the opening lines of his letter, seems to imply that the bishops had come together solely on

[1]Metlake thinks it must have been previous to the Council of Chalons because it appears to have been specially called for Columban. *Life of St. Columban*, p. 135.

[2]Chronicle of Fredegar, c. XXXII.

[3]*Ibid.*, c. XXIV.

[4]See c. VI, p. 24, note 1.

his account[1]. However, if Desiderius was also to be accused before the same tribunal, Columban may not have been aware of that fact when he wrote. Like Desiderius, the Abbot of Luxeuil had taken up an attitude of uncompromising opposition and reproach towards the queen because of her encouragement of the vices of her grandson. She could not dispose of two such powerful censors of her crimes without the show of justice implied in a canonical trial. In the person of Aredius[2], Bishop of Lyons, who himself bore no good reputation, she found a useful accomplice in her attempt to punish her opponents.

The letter is a defense of Columban's position on the Paschal celebration, with a suspicion here and there of a censure on the bishops themselves for neglecting many other duties that would be more profitable to souls than discussing the Easter question or interfering with the rubrics of Luxeuil[3].

3. *Iam Diu Omnes.* This is a further letter written to the Pope for a decision in favor of Columban's attitude on the Easter question. Both Krusch and Gundlach believe it to have been addressed to St. Gregory's successor, Pope Sabinian, in 604[4]. It is not improbable that Columban was tempted to bring the matter immediately before the newly elected pontiff, seeing that it had not been settled by his predecessor.

4. *Pax Vobis.* This is a letter written to St. Athala and the monks at Luxeuil after Columban had been ex-

[1]"Gratias ago Deo meo, quod mei causa in unum tanti congregati sunt sancti." *M. G. H.* III, p. 160.

[2]Or Arigius, appointed Bishop of Lyons A. D. 602. Bruno Krusch, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 7.

[3]*M. G. H.* III, p. 161.

[4]Sabinian was elected in September, 604, and reigned until February, 606. Krusch, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 7, note 2.

pelled from Burgundy by the king. It was written from Nantes, in 610, three years before Clothaire took possession of all the Frankish kingdoms. This event was foretold by St. Columban during his journey to Nantes, and the prophecy was actually fulfilled in 613 according to contemporary chroniclers. Better than any other work of St. Columban this letter gives us an insight into the depths of his soul and makes him live before us as an exceedingly lovable and human character. We can judge it from the following paragraph:

"I write thus to you because I am uncertain as to the future. It was my wish to visit the pagan nations and to have the gospel preached to them by us, but now I am almost discouraged by the reports that have come to me of their apathy. I had intended to write a tearful letter to you, but because I know that your hearts are torn under the weight of cares, hard and difficult in themselves, I have written in another vein, preferring to restrain tears rather than provoke them. I am keeping my sorrow to myself and permitting only gentleness and peace to appear on the outside. See my tears, how they flow in spite of myself, but I must hold them back, for a brave soldier does not weep in the moment of battle."[1]

Towards the end of the epistle again he writes:

"But now the parchment compels me to bring my letter to an end, though all that I have to say to you should compel me to write more. Love is not orderly, hence my message is confused."[2]

5. *Quis Poterit Glaber.* This is a letter written to

[1] *M. G. H.* III, p. 167.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Pope St. Boniface IV[1] on the question of the Three Chapters[2] which then agitated the Church in Northern Italy. This controversy concerning certain passages of the Nestorian writers, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa, had elsewhere become obsolete, but among the Lombard bishops and clergy it still gave rise to disunion when all efforts should be directed towards combating Arianism. The Emperor Justinian in a gesture of pride had these "chapters," as they were called, condemned a century after they were written and he endeavored to get Pope Vigilius[3] to condemn them also. The Pope wavered and finally refused. In this he followed the Council of Chalcedon[4] which had not formally condemned them, and though it might have been theologically correct to do so, it was entirely uncalled for and unnecessary at the time. This was in 544, seventy years before Columban came into touch with the controversy.

The Bishops of Lombardy took up the attitude that these chapters should be condemned by the Holy See, and Columban, seeing that the dispute was making it impossible to present a united front against the Arians in Lombardy, wanted the matter settled at any cost.

This letter was written probably soon after he arrived at the Lombard court in 613. He left Bregenz in May, 612, after the Battle of Tolbiac, when Theuderic had defeated his brother, Theudebert, and gained ascendency

[1]A. D. 608-615. The following were the Popes contemporary with St. Columban during his years at Luxeuil and Bobbio:

| | |
|---|---|
| Gregory I (the Great) | A. D. 590-604 |
| Sabinian | A. D. 604-606 |
| Boniface III | A D. 606-608 |
| Boniface IV | A. D. 608-615 |

[2]See Metlake, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 204.

[3]A. D. 537-555.

[4]A. D. 451.

over Alemannia, where Columban had up to that time been preaching to the heathens.

6. *Cum Iam de Moribus.* A sixth letter, admitted to have been written by St. Columban, is published by Gundlach among the *Epistolae* and by Fleming and Migne as one of the Homilies[1]. It was written to a young man who evidently had been keeping up a correspondence with St. Columban on spiritual matters. We are glad that the authenticity of this letter is established by both Gundlach and Seebass, the former on external, the latter on internal evidence. It is a masterly and striking exposition of the ideals of Christian perfection, presented in a number of concise phrases that carry conviction with them. From such phrases as

"Be strong in humility and humble in authority;
Be amiable to the good, uncompromising with the wicked;
Be gentle in giving, unremitting in charity,"

we might infer that it was written to some young nobleman from whom Columban expected much and who was in a position of authority. It is not unlikely that it was written, therefore, to some young Burgundian noble during Columban's years at Luxeuil.

## III. Poems

The poems attributed to St. Columban in many early manuscripts have also been edited by Wilhelm Gundlach in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* together with his prose letters. These poems are of a didactic character, written evidently to his disciples when circumstances placed them at some distance from him. Migne's collection, which is based on that of Fleming, has, in addition to Gundlach's collection, two others, the *Monosticha* and

[1]*Instructio XIV,* Vol. 80, Col. 256.

the *Epigram in Mulieres.* Migne also publishes as one epistle that to Hunaldus and the Epistle to Sethus, which Gundlach separates from each other. Another poem, known as the *Carmen Navale,* has been added on good authority, which makes in all seven poems that have come down to us under the name of Columban.

1. *The Poem to Hunaldus*[1] contains seventeen lines beginning with an acrostic ("Columbanus Hunaldo"), in which he exhorts his disciple to despise the transitory pleasures and vanity of the world and strive after everlasting joy. It has been accepted as authentic by all authorities of repute except Hertel, who argues that our saint always spoke of himself as Columba and not Columbanus. We know, however, from Jonas, that both Columba and Columbanus were equally applied to him[2], and we may safely conclude that the poem is the authentic work of the saint.

2. *Poem to Sethus*[3], is found in Migne as part of the verse to Hunaldus and begins with the words, "Suscipe Hunalde libens," but there is a note to the effect that the other reading, "Suscipe Sethe libens," is found in Goldast, who first published these poems in 1604. Gundlach considers the latter reading the correct original and edits it as a separate poem. Like the letter to Hunaldus, it exhorts Sethus to despise the world and follow the precepts of Christ.

Gundlach gives to both poems the probable date A. D. 612-615, which would imply that they were written from Bobbio to two of his former disciples, perhaps at Luxeuil. They may have been brought back by St. Eustace or his

[1]Edited by Gundlach, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* Vol. III.

[2]"Columbanus etenim qui et Columba ortus Hibernia insula extremo Oceano sita." Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* I. 2.

[3]Gundlach, *Op. Cit.,* p. 183.

companions on their return from Bobbio where, as we know, Eustace had gone at the request of Clothaire soon after the latter became King of the Franks in A. D. 613. These poems are found, together with another addressed to Fidolius, in two St. Gall manuscripts of the ninth and tenth centuries and also in a Paris manuscript of the tenth century.

3. *Poem to Fidolius,* edited by Gundlach[1]. This is found also by itself in a Berlin manuscript of the eighth century under the name of St. Columban. It immediately follows[2] the original of Columban's *Carmen Navale,* which we shall discuss presently. Since this poem is so important in arranging the chronology of St. Columban's life, his biographers are particularly interested in placing its authenticity and date beyond question.

a. *Authenticity.* All critics of the Columban poems agree that the three letters above mentioned, namely, to Hunaldus, Sethus and Fidolius, must stand or fall together, and the weight of authority is overwhelmingly in favor of their Columban authorship. They are admitted unhesitatingly by Ebert[3] and by Scherer[4]. Gundlach defends them against Hertel, who is the only authority of note who questions them, but whose arguments are entirely unconvincing[5]. The fact that they are found together in manuscripts of the ninth and tenth century under Columban's name and evidently independent of each other[6], and that on the other hand no good reason has been urged for denying their Columban authorship,

[1] *Op. Cit.,* p. 168.
[2] Dümmler in the *Neues Archivium* VI, p. 190.
[3] *History of Christian Latin Literature,* I, p. 582.
[4] *History of German Literature,* p. 37.
[5] *Zeitschrift für die hist. Theol.* p. 472-430. (1875).
[6] St. Gall MS. 273 (ninth century) and MS. 899 (tenth century). Paris MS. 8303 (tenth century).

seems to be adequate grounds for accepting all three as authentic.

b. *Date.* The fact that the letter to Fidolius, in addition to being found with the other two above mentioned, is also found by itself in a German manuscript of the eighth century under his name, seems to point to the fact that its recipient lived on the German side of the Alps. Consequently, it would have been written from Bobbio, towards the end of Columban's life. In this German manuscript now at Berlin, the letter to Fidolius immediately follows a manuscript of the old German boat song which was discovered by Ernest Dümmler and on which Columban based the thought and refrain at least of his *Carmen Navale.*

Fidolius was interested in poetry, as is evident from the letter. Is it not reasonable to suppose some connection between him and the person who supplied Columban with the original words of the boat song he heard on the Rhine? At least we might assume that both documents were originally in the possession of the same person, and that he lived at the Alemannian side of the Rhine and Alps. This theory would account for the ancient boat song and the letter to Fidolius finding their way together into a German manuscript at such an early date[1]. Consequently we might fix the date of the letter to Fidolius between A. D. 613 and 615 when Columban was at the Italian side of the Alps. Can we come nearer to the date? I think so.

But first let us translate a few stanzas which will help us perhaps to breathe the atmosphere in which it was written:

[1]Eighth century.

"Please accept
These little gifts of song,
Which this time I write in a dimeter verse;
And on your part repay me frequently
With mutual obligations
Of loyal affection.

"For, as in the summer time,
When the south winds are blowing,
The arid fields
Rejoice in the soft rains,
So do your notes, frequently sent to me,
Bring joy to my soul.

"I do not ask for gifts
Of treasure that will perish;
No, because the avaricious man
Seeks only gold in all he does.
It blinds the eyes of wise men and like a flame of fire
Destroys the hard of heart."[1]

Then follows a number of other stanzas in Adonic verse that display a fine familiarity with classical poetry and mythology. Towards the end Columban invites his friend to attempt similar verses and instructs him how to write these songs with which "Sappho loved to charm her friends"[2]. He ends his poem with expressions of affection for Fidolius, calling down upon him the blessing of Christ:

[1] *M. G. H.*, p. 186, ll. 1-28.
[2] "Inclyta vates
Nomine Saffo
Versibus istis
Dulce solebat
Edere carmen."
Ibid., p. 188, ll. 120-124.

"And you, my brother Fidolius,
Sweeter to me than nectar[1],
Leaving aside the flowery songs of the learned ones,
Accept with indulgence mine in a lighter vein.
And may Christ, the Ruler of the Universe,
The only Son of the Omnipotent,
Grant to you all the sweet joys of life,
Who, without end, governing all things in the Name of the Father,
Reigneth forever."

There follows an hexameter verse of six lines in which the author speaks of his old age and illness and of the ebbing out of his life[2]:

"These things I had composed for you, when oppressed with painful disease,
Which in my sad old age I suffer in this frail body of mine.
For with the rapid course of time, we now come to the eighteenth olympiad.
All things pass; time flies without return.
So live! Good-bye! Be joyful, but remember sad old age."

The playful tone of the poem would indicate that the author is writing in cheerful and happy surroundings in spite of the suffering from illness and age that he

[1] "Nectare, si vis (v. l. nobis)
Dulcior omni."
Ibid., ll. 143-144. Cf. Letter to Pope Gregory, M. G. H. III, p. 159. Columban describes the Pope's book on the *Pastoral Office* as "sweeter than honey"—(melle dulcius egenti opus esse fateor).

[2] "Nunc ad olympiadis ter senos venimus annos." *Op. Cit.* p. 188, l. 163. The chronology of St. Columban's life turns chiefly on the interpretation of this line. See Chronology II, p. 172.

mentions in the closing verse. It is also evident from the opening lines that both he and Fidolius had frequently in the past exchanged their greetings in verse, and that the author's friendship for Fidolius, "sweeter than nectar," was one of long standing. Did it begin in his native land, or was it one of those later friendships that Columban's personality had apparently so much power to stimulate? Whoever he was, Fidolius was a scholar and a poet, and, if Columban's words mean anything, he was one of his dearest friends.

The last verse, which has been the source of so much discussion by scholars, shows the author to be in extreme old age and weak from disease and suffering. While Columban was fighting the Arians he was full of vigor, as his letter to Pope St. Boniface shows, and in the building of Bobbio, according to Jonas, he took his share of the work, dragging huge logs from the mountain side[1]. We must therefore place this letter during his last days at Bobbio, that is, early in 615, in the summer perhaps, when the "arid fields" near the Trebbia drank in the soft rains that came with the south winds over the hillsides of Lombardy. At the end of the following November Columban had passed to his reward.

4. *Mundus Iste Transibit*[2]. This was included by Migne both among the prose letters and the *Carmina*, probably because since its meter is not quite exact it is scarcely a poem in the strict sense, yet the thoughts and expressions are probably more beautiful than anything we find in his other poems. This epistle, with the previous three, was first published by Goldast, who states that he found it ascribed to St. Columban in the St. Gall manuscript which he used. It was written to a young

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 30.
[2]Edited by Gundlach, *M. G. H.* III, p. 189.

friend on Columban's favorite theme, the vanity of human life and the wisdom of striving towards eternity. Gundlach groups it with the other three poems under the probable dates 612-615 A. D.

5. The *Monosticha* is published by Migne.[1] It is not included in Gundlach's edition, though he defends its authenticity both from its internal resemblance to Columban's other poetical epistles and because of the strong manuscript authority in its favor. Four early manuscripts expressly mention the tradition of the Columban authorship. One expressly calls it the "Libellus Beati Columbani," and another of the eleventh century refers to it as the "Versus Columbani Abbatis de Bonis Moribus Observandis." Four other manuscripts do not mention the author's name, so that they are neutral[2]. The arguments brought forward by Hertel and Dümmler, the former ascribing it to Aldhelm of Malmesbury[3], a seventh century poet, the latter to Alcuin[4], are very unconvincing, especially in the face of the manuscript authority in its favor and the internal evidence pointed out by Gundlach. The poem is a treatise containing two hundred and seven lines inculcating moral precepts and outlining the proper guidance of our lives. Its date is uncertain, but because of its character it may be reasonably enough placed during Columban's Luxeuil days, when he was enjoining precepts of perfection on the monks who flocked to him from Burgundy.

[1]Migne, Vol. 80, Col. 284.

[2]Concannon, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 293.

[3]Abbot of Malmesbury, England, (b. 645?-d. 709). "His literary importance," Montalembert says, "has been singularly exaggerated." *Monks of the West*, Book XIII, c. III, p. 531.

[4]A. D. 735-804. One of the leading figures in the renaissance of Charlemagne. Although English by birth, "he is justly considered a representative of Irish learning." Bishop Turner, *History of Philosophy*, p. 241.

6. The *Epigram in Mulieres*[1]. A verse of four lines contrasting the evil which woman brought upon the world with the joys which another woman brought into our lives. Seebass favors its Columban authorship, while Hertel and Gundlach reject it, apparently under the impression that the last line, "Femina sed vitae gaudia longa dedit," is too complimentary to woman to have been used by St. Columban. This argument to our mind has no force, and besides, the line, as Seebass points out, refers to the Blessed Virgin while the first lines refer to Eve.

7. The *Carmen Navale* or boat song, edited by Ernest Dümmler in *Neues Archivium,* 1880, was discovered by Dr. Wilhelm Meyer in a tenth century manuscript at Munich[2]. It is based on an ancient German boat song previously discovered by Dümmler in the same Berlin manuscript which contained the letter to Fidolius[3]. The refrain, "Courage, comrades, let our resounding echo answer 'courage!' " is the same in both[4]. In the Munich manuscript the first portion of the author's name has been destroyed and the remaining portion reads "banus." Even the "b" is not quite definite. Dr. Meyer, however, completed it to read "Columbanus," and Bruno Krusch thinks that there is no doubt that it was written by the same author as the letter to Pope St. Boniface, because of the similarity of thought and expression where St. Columban exhorts the Pope: "Watch because the sea is stormy and driven to fury by death-bearing winds; therefore I, a timid sailor, dare to warn; watch because

[1]Migne, Vol. 80, Col. 294.
[2]Leiden, "Vossianus Graecus" MS. Q. 7.
[2]*Zeitschrift für Deutches Altertum* (Series V, p. 144); Analecta Catulliana—Baehrens, p. 77.
[3]"Heia, viri, nostrum reboans echo sonet heia."

the water has already entered the ship and the ship is in danger[1]."

Dümmler thinks that it should be ascribed to a later Irish poet named Columban[2], but history records no other such name to which a poem of the classic merit of the *Carmen Navale* can be reasonably ascribed.

The opening lines of the poem,

"Behold amid the forests of the Rhine,
Our boat speeds on, lashed by the waves,"

enables us to place its date as 610-11 A. D. when Columban and his companions journeyed from Mayence to Lake Constance after their expulsion from Luxeuil. The words and refrain which he probably heard the boatmen sing reminded him of the comparison between the storm that the wind stirs up in the water and that which the enemy of our souls stirs up within the human heart. The way to conquer is the same—courage, determined struggle on the one hand, "unwavering faith and blessed zeal" on the other. In the last four stanzas, the refrain changes to "Remembering Christ, my comrades, let your souls cry 'courage!' "[3].

The following is a fairly literal translation of the original:

ST. COLUMBAN'S BOAT SONG[4]

I.

Behold amid the forests of the Rhine,
Our boat speeds on, lashed by the waves,
And glides through the water, wet with spray.
*Courage, comrades, let our resounding echo*
*answer 'courage'.*

[1] *Epistola V, M. G. H.* III, p. 170.
[2] *Neues Archivium* VI, p. 190.
[3] "Vestra, viri, Christum memorans mens personet heia."
[4] The original is reproduced from the *Neues Archivium* by Mrs. Concannon, *Life of St. Columban,* p. 294, and by Metlake, *Life of St. Columban,* p. 172.

II.

The winds raise up their voices,
And the angry rains beat down upon us,
But the united strength of men overcomes and conquers the tempest.
*Courage, comrades, let our resounding echo answer 'courage'.*

III.

For though the clouds pour down and the storm lashes with fury,
The will to win knows no defeat;
And unyielding toil conquers in the end.
*Courage, comrades, let our resounding echo answer 'courage'.*

IV.

Stand fast, you who suffer great sorrows,
And hold yourself prepared for future joys,
For God will end them in His own good time.
*Courage, comrades, let our resounding echo answer 'courage'.*

V.

Thus works our hated enemy, bringing unrest to our souls,
And by tempting the heart to evil,
Disturbs with passion our inmost being.
*Remembering Christ, my comrades, let your hearts cry 'courage'.*

VI.

Stand firm in spirit and spurn the wiles of the enemy,
And armed with virtue,
Defend yourself with all your strength.
*Remembering Christ, my comrades, let your hearts cry 'courage'.*

VII.

Unwavering faith and blessed zeal wins through every danger,
And harmless fall the shafts of the ancient enemy,
As he turns to fly.
*Remembering Christ, my comrades, let your hearts cry 'courage'.*

VIII.

The King of Virtues, Fount of all good, Omnipotent Power,
Promises the reward to him who fights,
And gives to him who conquers.
*Remembering Christ, my comrades, let your hearts cry 'courage'.*

It was indeed an appropriate rallying-song; appropriate on the lips of the monks who, under their courageous leader, had weathered so many storms; appropriate, too, on the lips of Columban who, through the semi-barbarism of early Europe, had piloted a great monastic and missionary enterprise to the rescue of countless souls.

## II

## CHRONOLOGICAL

### I. The Date of St. Columban's Death

ONLY a few dates towards the end of St. Columban's life can be fixed with anything like accuracy. We know that he died on the 23rd of November in the year 615. Jonas writes: "Porro Beatus Columbanus, expleto anni circulo, in antedicto caenubio Ebobiensi vita beata functus animam membris solutam caelo reddidit VIIII Kl Decembris"[1]. The year referred to (expleto anni circulo) is the period following the visit of St. Eustace who had been sent by King Clothaire to invite Columban back to Luxeuil after the former had become sole king of the Franks. This occurred in 613 A. D., so that we might expect Eustace to have reached Bobbio some time in 614, probably late in the year, for, as we can infer from the text, it was after the foundation of Bobbio.

Columban had crossed the Alps in the summer of 612. It was in May of that year, after the Battle of Tolbiac[2], that Theuderic gained possession of Alemannia, which made it unsafe for Columban to continue his mission at Bregenz, as Theuderic had already expelled him from Burgundy. He would thus have arrived at Milan on the other side of the Alps before winter set in, probably in the autumn of 612. Then began his activities in combating the Arian heresy. He carried on a correspondence with Agripinus, Bishop of Coma, who had evidently written urging him to take his side in the dispute

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 30.
[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 28.

regarding the Three Chapters. Columban had written him two letters, copies of which he enclosed in his letter to Pope St. Boniface[1]. He wrote pamphlets against the Arians[2], and then there were his letter to St. Boniface and his missionary activity, all of which made a considerable impression on Northern Italy. When we remember that Columban at this time was a man past four score years we should allow the longest possible period between his advent to Milan and the foundation of Bobbio. It seems best to place the latter event about the late summer of 614. This would allow him some two years at the court of the King of Lombardy and a year at Bobbio before his death, which agrees with the statement of Jonas that he had completed a year in the monastery at Bobbio. Later on in the autumn Eustace came, and the following year, "expleto anni circulo," Columban died, A. D. 615. So much for the year.

According to the best reading of Jonas, adopted by Bruno Krusch, Columban died on the ninth day before the *kalends* or first day of December,—"VIIII Kl Decembris,"—or November 23rd. Some manuscripts have "XI Kl Decembris," the eleventh day before the *kalends*, but they are much later than those which read the ninth day, and besides, they have been copied one from the other. Surius in 1570 and Fleming in 1667 give the reading "ninth day before the *kalends* of December." This also agrees with ancient martyrologies; for example, the seventh century "Martyrologium Hieronymi" reads: "VIIII K. Dec. In Italia monasterio Bobio depositio sancti Columbani abb," and in the old martyrologies

[1] *Ep. Columbani V, M. G. H.* III, p. 170.
[2] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 30.

"depositio" indicated the death, not the burial as we might now suppose[1].

Confirmatory of this reading of Jonas is the statement in the life of St. Gall that Columban died early on Sunday morning: "For on a certain Sunday at the end of morning prayers at the first light of day, the man of God (St. Gall) called the deacon Maginald, saying: 'Arise quickly and make ready for me to celebrate Mass . . . for after midnight it was revealed to me that my master Columban had passed away and I shall offer the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of his soul.' "[2] Next day he sent Maginald to Bobbio to learn what he could about Columban's last days and there he found that "everything had happened just as it had been revealed to his master"[3].

When Columban was leaving Bregenz three years before, he wished St. Gall to accompany him over the Alps. Gall, who was sick at the time, begged leave to remain. For this act of weakness Columban, as a penance, forbade him to celebrate Mass until after his death[4]. The first Mass that Gall celebrated was for the repose of his master's soul, and Maginald brought back with him from Bobbio Columban's crosier, which he had willed to Gall as a token of his forgiveness and absolution. We know from the ancient calendars that in the year 615 A. D. November 23rd (the ninth day before the *kalends* of December) fell on Sunday, so that we can definitely place the date of Columban's death as Sunday morning, November 23rd, A. D. 615[5].

[1] *M. G. H.* IV, p. 108, Bruno Krusch, note.
[2] *Vita Galli,* Auc. Wet., c. XXVI, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 270.
[3] Ibid.
[4] *Vita Galli,* Auc. Wal., I. 9.
[5] Bruno Krusch, note, *Vita Columbani,* Jonas, *M. G. H.* IV. p. 108. Also article on the death of St. Columbanus, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record,* December, 1884, MacCarthy.

## II. Date of Birth

The date of St. Columban's birth has given rise to considerable controversy, and two views are usually given, according to the interpretation of a line in the Epistle to Fidolius which seems to indicate his age at the time this epistle was written,—"We now come to the eighteenth olympiad."[1] Olympiad in the Greek usage meant a four-year period; with the Latins it was equivalent to "lustrum," a five-year period. The phrase as used by Columban does not imply that he had entered the eighteenth olympiad, but that he was approaching that time of life. According to the Greek calculation he would have been sixty-eight years at this time, while if we take olympiad in the Latin sense he would have been in his eighty-fifth year. The poem itself was most probably written a few months before he died[2]. Mabillon and Bruno Krusch decide in favor of the Latin reading after the custom of the Latin poets, and the latter quotes Ausonius (A. D. 310-395) in support of his view. We might indeed expect that Columban would have adopted the Latin usage with which he was so familiar, and besides in later years at Bobbio "olympiad" was actually used as the equivalent of "lustrum." This interpretation would give us the year 529 as the date of his birth[3].

The probability of this date seems to be confirmed from the chronology of the life of St. Gall, who from boyhood was Columban's friend and associate. Although the Life of St. Gall which has come down to us is not at all of the same historical value as the work of Jonas, we can draw some reasonable conclusions from cer-

[1] *M. G. H.* III, p. 188. "Nunc ad olympiadis ter senos venimus annos."

[2] See I—The Columbiana, p. 163.

[3] Moran, *Early Irish Church*, p. 251.

tain traditions that it undoubtedly reflects. From the *Vita S. Galli* by Wettinus, a monk of Reichenau who died in 824, we learn the following tradition about Gall: "Since from his boyhood he loved God and devoted himself to the study of the liberal arts, with the approval of his parents he was intrusted to Columban, who was a man worthy of veneration . . . and with the help of Christ, when he had come to the proper age, he approached the dignity of the priesthood on the advice of his spiritual father before mentioned and with the persuasion of his spiritual brothers, although he himself was unwilling."[1] This was at Bangor.

According to the best authorities Bangor was founded in the year 559. The Four Masters place it in 552, which Archbishop Healy says is much too early. From the passage in the *Vita Galli* above quoted, it is evident that Columban was already a well-known figure in the monastery. He was a spiritual director and consequently, we may assume, a priest, and therefore over thirty years, the canonical age for ordination at the time. From another passage in the same work we infer that he had charge of the studies and discipline[3]. Consequently he must have been a considerably older man than Gall, for he had already become prominent as a teacher and spiritual guide.

Gall was young enough at the time to require the consent of his parents to enter Bangor. Taking the sense of the text into account, we may reasonably suppose that he was about twenty years of age when he became the

[1] *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wet., c. I.

[2] "Qui (Columbanus) vitae normam exemplis patrum tenens vestigiumque humilitatis cunctis praetendens, mellifluam doctrinam secum degentibus oportune tradidit. Inter quos praedictus puer (Gallus) humilitate ac strenuitate pollebat magistrum suum in studiis divinis sectans." *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wet., c. I.

pupil of St. Columban, and this could not have been earlier than 559 or 560. This would give us 540 as a probable date for his birth and 635 as the date of his death at the age of ninety-five. We accept ninety-five as his age at the time of his death because it is found in the oldest extant life of the saint[1], and though written a hundred years after his death, evidently reflects a consant tradition that could very easily be preserved over such a period, especially amongst men who had so much veneration for his memory.

That 635 A. D., or at least some time about the middle of that decade, is a probable date for St. Gall's death appears from the following data:

The oldest Life of St. Gall, and the two subsequent ones based on it, tell us that after the death of St. Eustace, Columban's successor at Luxeuil, a deputation of six monks from Luxeuil came to invite St. Gall to be their abbot. This dignity he declined, remarking that he had already refused a bishopric[2] and that for the sake of Christ he had left his parents and worldly wealth behind him[3]. The early martyrologies indicate that St. Eustace died on April 2nd and the year is inferred from the date of the accession of his successor, Walbert, in 629, which according to Bruno Krusch has been conclusively proved by Havet[4]. We may therefore with reasonable certainty place the date of this deputation of monks inviting St. Gall back to Luxeuil during the spring or summer of 629.

[1] *Vitae Galli Vetustissimae Fragmentum, M. G. H.* IV, p. 251. Edited by Bruno Krusch, written most probably on the occasion of the translation of the relics of St. Gall, A. D. 744-5. Bruno Krusch, Intro., p. 230. Clark, *Abbey of St. Gall*, p. 4.

[2] The Bishopric of Constance, to which his disciple John was afterwards appointed.

[3] *Vita Galli Vet., M. G. H.* IV, p. 252.

[4] *Vita Columbani* II, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 130, note.

The next paragraph in the *Vita Galli Vetustissima* begins with the words, "Post aliquot vero temporis," and in Walahfrid's *Life* with the words ,"Nec multo post,"—"a short time after," and goes on to relate the events leading up to the saint's death, the death itself on the 16th of October at the age of ninety-five, his burial and the panegyric which was preached by John, Bishop of Constance. Allowing for the rapid transitions in the relation of events so frequently met with in these early hagiographies, we might expect a few years to elapse between the deputation from the monks of Luxeuil and St. Gall's death. Five or six years do not seem to be too long a time, and this would fix the date of his death in the year 635 or thereabouts[1]. We can not place it later than 641 or 642, because some ancient catalogues record the death of John, Bishop of Constance, as occurring on the latter date, and we know that he preached the sermon at St. Gall's funeral[2].

On this reckoning then, St. Columban, born in 529, would have been eleven years older than St. Gall, born in 540. This will readily explain the tradition that Columban was St. Gall's professor and spiritual guide at Bangor. No other reckoning of the chronology of the lives of both saints, it seems to us, will give so reasonable an explanation of this tradition.

### III. Other Events in Early Life

Before we pass on to his later chronology we would like to fix with some degree of probability a few events

[1]Mabillon places the date of St. Gall's death at 646; *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 274, note A, Paris. He hesitates to believe that the monks of Luxeuil would look for an octogenarian abbot, but Gall and Columban were men of extraordinary physique as well as sanctity and intellect, even in their eighties.

[2]*Life of St. Columban,* Metlake, p. 195.

in St. Columban's early life, namely, his advent to Sinnell's school in Lough Erne, his admission among the monks of Bangor and his ordination.

We learn from Jonas that he had grown to manhood, "ad virilem aetatem," before he decided to leave the world[1]. This would imply that he was twenty or twenty-one years of age and so we can place the date of that event at about 550 or 551 A. D. He remained at Sinnell's school long enough, according to Jonas, to write "a commentary on the Psalms in elegant diction and many other writings that were suitable for chant or useful for teaching."[2] Although Columban "from boyhood devoted himself to letters and grammar," and might be expected to have laid the foundation of a good classical knowledge before he went to Sinnell's school, we must, nevertheless, allow a considerable number of years for such accomplishments as Jonas mentions. After that, Jonas tells us, he sought to join the community of monks at Bangor where Comgall was abbot. We do not think that a period of eight or nine years is too long to cover Columban's stay at Sinnell's school.

Young Columban was a Leinster boy and Comgall a native of Dalriada, a district in the north of what is now County Down. How then did he become attracted to Comgall and to Bangor? The explanation seems to be that Comgall, some time before the foundation of Bangor, had established a retreat for himself and a few comrades in another island of Lough Erne at the same

[1] *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 3.

[2] *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 3. See also Concannon's *Life of St. Columban*, pp. 37-38. St. Columban's Commentary on the Psalms is mentioned in the early library catalogues of St. Gall and Bobbio, and many authorities think that it is still preserved in the *Codex Ambrosianus* at the Ambrosian Library of Milan. See Bruno Krusch, Introduction, *Vita Columbani*, *M. G. H.* IV, p. 18.

time that Columban was a pupil of Sinnell at Cleenish. According to Archbishop Healy, Comgall lived at this retreat in Lough Erne between 555 and 559. He suggests the latter date as the most probable for the foundation of Bangor[1]. It is not therefore unlikely that young Columban followed him there and was one of his first companions.

Columban was ordained priest at Bangor. Jonas does not mention his priesthood anywhere in his biography, but in the hymn that he wrote for his feast we have these opening lines:

> "Clare sacerdos, clues, almo fultus decore
> Tuis, Columba, decus qui redoles in orbe."[2]

Bruno Krusch thinks that, without doubt, this hymn was written by Jonas[3]. The Life of St. Gall also places the priesthood of St. Columban beyond question, for on one occasion when a gift of a silver chalice had been offered to Gall he refused to accept it, saying, "My master, Blessed Columban, was accustomed to offer the Sacrifice of Salvation to the Lord in bronze chalices because of the tradition that Our Saviour was nailed to the cross with nails of bronze."[4] Besides, an old manuscript missal in Bobbio contains a prayer for the Feast of St. Columban which opens as follows: "Deus, qui nos sancti Columbani sacerdotis et confessoris tui annua beatae confessionis solemnitate laetificas . . ."[5]

Born in 529, Columban would have already been thirty, the canonical age, at the time he entered Bangor. He was in all probability a priest before Gall was intrusted

[1]Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 367.
[2]*Vita Columbani I, M. G. H.* IV, p. 109.
[3]Bruno Krusch, note, *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, *M. G. H. IV*, p. 34 and 109.
[4]*Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal., I. 19.
[5]Martin, *Vie de S. Colomban*, p. 70, n. 1.

to his care, because as we have seen his relations with Gall and the other monks as outlined in the Life of St. Gall seem to have been those of a spiritual director, an office that would most likely have been conferred on him by Comgall only after he had become a priest. Consequently we may fix the year 560 as the most probable date for his ordination.

## IV. Arrival in Gaul

The actual date of Columban's arrival in Gaul and the route he followed are shrouded in uncertainty. We can not be sure of an accurate interpretation of the passages in Jonas bearing upon it, and we can only attempt to interpret as faithfully as possible the traditions reflected in these statements. Jonas tells us that after Columban had completed many years in the monastery at Bangor he began to desire pilgrimage[1] and that he began his missionary career when he was in his twentieth year[2].

This is an obvious error either on the part of Jonas or of some early copyist, and impossible to fit in with anything else we know of the life of St. Columban. Even if we take "tricesimum, thirtieth" instead of "vicesimum, twentieth," as some manuscripts read, it does not solve all the difficulties. But we may safely assume that the statement reflects some tradition that Jonas learned from Columban's companions, a tradition of Columban's comparative youthfulness either when he entered or left Bangor. Had he been a man of sixty when he began his missionary labors, as we would be forced to admit if he did not reach Gaul until 590, this remarkable fact

[1] "Coepit peregrinationem desiderare." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 4.
[2] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 4. "Vicesimum ergo aetatis annum agens."

would surely be preserved in a tradition of which Jonas could scarcely be ignorant.

Again we turn to the Life of St. Gall for the confirmation of our tradition that Columban was a comparatively young man when he began his missionary career. Gall, like Columban, was ordained at Bangor when, as we are told, he had reached the canonical age[1]. This was in 570 according to our chronology. Referring to the ordination of St. Gall and circumstances immediately following, Walahfrid begins his next paragraph with the words, "Dum haec agerentur,—While these things were happening," and goes on to relate St. Columban's desire to become a missionary and the beginning of the pilgrimage to Gaul.

If, as we are justified in assuming, Walahfrid faithfully represents an early tradition[2], this would place the departure from Bangor of both St. Columban and St. Gall soon after the latter's ordination and between 570 and 575, which would agree with the tradition represented by Jonas that Columban arrived in Gaul in the reign of King Sigibert, who was assassinated in the year 575. Columban would have been at that time less than forty-five years of age, and this would explain the tradition expressed by Jonas that he was a comparatively young man when he left Bangor.

Jonas states that he came to Gaul when Sigibert was King of Austrasia and Burgundy[3] and that it was this king who persuaded him to establish himself at Annegray in the forest of the Vosges. Sigibert was never King of Burgundy, as that country was commonly known,

[1] *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wet., *M. G. H.* IV, p. 257. "Ad aetatem veniens . . . praefato patre eum conpellente . . . sacerdotii gradum adiit."
[2] *Vita Galli*, Auc. Wal., *M. G. H.* IV, p. 286.
[3] *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 6.

but at the same time it is evident from passages in Jonas that he did not write Sigibert's name by mistake. In another place he speaks of him and gives very accurate facts about him and refers to the previous mention of his name. Evidently he also had before him the *History of the Franks* by Gregory of Tours, as Bruno Krusch points out[1]. Here again we must suppose that Jonas reflects a tradition and our difficulty is, first, to explain how King Sigibert could have given a grant of land to Columban in a territory over which he did not rule, and secondly, to reconcile the tradition of so early an arrival in Gaul with other statements made by both Columban and Jonas.

Gunthran was at this time King of Orleans and Burgundy, and as the forest of the Vosges in which Columban settled evidently belonged to Burgundy after 595, some infer that it also belonged to Burgundy previous to that date. Consequently Gunthran and not Sigibert, as Jonas thinks, was the king who received Columban. As a matter of fact, it is not clear from the text of Jonas that any grant of land was made. The king in question merely recomended Columban to take up his abode in the desert where "he could bear his cross and follow Christ," as Columban told him he wished to do.[2]

After the death of Clothaire I in 561, the Frankish kingdom was divided between his four sons, but we do not know the exact boundaries of the new divisions. The Merovingian kings did not round off their kingdoms by well-defined frontiers. They were interested chiefly in securing an equal number of royal domains, rich cities and vineyards in the south. Each brother demanded a duchy in Aquitania; Paris remained common to all and

[1] *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 18.
[2] *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 6.

each one fortified a part of the city as his own concession.

To some extent the watersheds of the great rivers were regarded as boundary lines. In the Roman days rivers were frontiers, natural barriers, but with the growth of commerce on the waterways of Gaul the rivers became the natural centers of political territories and the new kingdoms comprised the lands on both sides of the river basin as far as the sources of its tributaries.

In the eastern section of Gaul, Sigibert ruled in Austrasia and Gunthran in Orleans and Burgundy. In a general way the Vosges forest was regarded as the boundary between the two kingdoms. It spread in a westerly direction from the slopes of the Vosges mountains along the divide which forms the watershed between the headwaters of the Saône to the south and the Moselle on the north. In 587, twelve years after Sigibert's death, an attempt was made in the Treaty of Andelot[1] to define the limits of Austrasia and Burgundy, but it is not clear from the text of the treaty nor from any other contemporary source whether the Vosges country in which Columban had settled belonged to Austrasia or Burgundy.

Gregory of Tours, writing of an event that occurred in 590, "the fifteenth year of Childebert and the twenty-ninth of Gunthran," speaks of the latter as hunting in the Vosges forest—"per Vosagum silvam"[2]. This is the only place where Gregory refers to this particular forest, and most authorities regard it as a reference to the territory around the source of the Saône. Maury in his work

[1]The text of the Treaty of Andelot reproduced by Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Fr.* Lib. IX, c. XX, p. 367.
[2]*Hist. Fr.* Lib. X, c. X.

on the forests of Gaul[1] thinks that the Vosges forest here mentioned was the same as Voës, south of Laon, but the weight of opinion is against him. Longnon, one of our leading authorities on the geography of medieval Gaul, thinks that the Vosges mentioned by Gregory stretched south along the country washed by the headwaters of the Saône and, while the Vosges formed the boundary between Burgundy and Austrasia, he regards it nevertheless as certain that "this forest region was entirely comprised in the Kingdom of Austrasia."[2]

Of the three Columban monasteries, Annegray, Luxeuil and Fontaines, Annegray was the farthest north and the first founded. Luxeuil is about twelve miles to the south,—another reason for supposing that Columban penetrated the desert from the north and therefore from Austrasia rather than from the south through Burgundy. It is interesting to note that the line of demarcation set up by Lablache and others as the boundary between Burgundy and Austrasia after the Treaty of Andelot runs south of Annegray between it and Luxeuil, corresponding fairly accurately with the ridge of the divide between the sources of the Saône and that of the Moselle[3]. Luxeuil is south of this line on the southern side of the divide. If this is correct, it would seem that after the Treaty of Andelot, Annegray belonged to Austrasia, and Luxeuil and Fontaines to Burgundy. Hence in 590 when Luxeuil was founded, Columban would naturally seek permission for his new foundation from Gunthran, if indeed any permission were needed, and

[1]Maury, *Les Forêts de la Gaule*, p. 110.

[2]Longnon, *Géographie de la Gaule*, p. 153-154.

[3]See map of Merovingian Gaul in the time of St. Columban (Appendix). This map is based on the lines set up by the best authorities on the political divisions of the period and the geography of medieval Gaul.

he might regard his sojourn in Burgundy as dating from that year.

In the Life of St. Salaberga by an unknown author, whom, however, Mabillon considers trustworthy and almost contemporary, there is a reference to Luxeuil, "a monastery of the Vosges, which Columban established in the time of Childebert and through his munificence."[1] There is no reference to the other monasteries of Columban, and the passage does not necessarily apply to Columban's first advent to the Vosges. It is easy to understand why Childebert should be mentioned, since Gunthran had become his guardian after the death of his father, and Childebert afterwards became ruler of both kingdoms during the first years of the existence of Columban's new monastery at Luxeuil.

Nothing that we can find in historical sources of the period would lead us to assume that Jonas erred when he wrote that Columban arrived in Gaul during the reign of King Sigibert, that is, prior to 575.

The second difficulty remains of reconciling this early date with certain apparently definite statements made by both Jonas and Columban himself as to the length of the period spent in the neighborhood of Luxeuil. In his letter to the Bishops of Gaul in 603, Columban says that he had lived among them for twelve years[2]. Jonas, relating the circumstances of his expulsion from Luxeuil in 610, says that it occurred in the twentieth year after he had taken up his residence in that desert[3]. Both of them undoubtedly had in mind some important event in

[1] *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 422.

[2] "Sicut usque nunc licuit nobis inter vos vixisse duodecim annis." *Ep. Col. IV, M. G. H.* p. 162.

[3] "Vicesimo anno post incolatum heremi illius." *Vita Columbani*, Jonas, I. 20.

Columban's life that occurred then, but is that event necessarily the advent of Columban into eastern Gaul? We do not think so.

These definite references to time can be reconciled with his earlier advent to Gaul if we assume that when they wrote both Columban and Jonas had in mind an event so outstanding as to be a landmark in St. Columban's life, rather than the whole period covering his sojourn in the Vosges. The foundation of Luxeuil was such a landmark. It had been up to that time the outstanding event of his life. It had eclipsed Annegray and was now Columban's own headquarters. Besides, as we have seen, its foundation meant coming into a new kingdom, crossing over from Austrasia into Burgundy, and thus he could write to the Bishops of Burgundy that he had lived among them for twelve years, although he had really been previously living for fifteen years in a neighboring kingdom and ecclesiastical province[1]. The expression used by Jonas, "post incolatum heremi," then, would refer to the district immediately around Luxeuil and in the kingdom of Burgundy from which Columban was being expelled, rather than the whole desert near the Vosges where the three Columban monasteries were situated.

This view seems to be borne out by the large number of monks that had at the foundation of Luxeuil already formed Columban's spiritual family. One monastery was no longer sufficient[2]. When we remember that Gaul at this time was little better than a pagan country, we find it impossible to believe that even a man like Columban

[1]The ancient territory of Sequania, into which Columban had come, is exactly represented by the ecclesiastical province of Besançon, according to Walckenaer, *Géographie des Gaules I*, c. II, p. 318, Paris, 1839.

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 10.

could have gathered so many monks around him from an uncultured and unchristian race in the space of a year or two. Even allowing fifteen or twenty years by placing the foundation of Annegray before 575, it would still be difficult to explain such an extraordinary influx of vocations except through a miracle of grace which is rarely found elsewhere in the annals of the Church. This argument has still greater force when we remember the severity of the life that Columban expected these monks to lead.

Besides, in his letter to the Bishops of Burgundy, Columban begs to be allowed to end his days in peace among them and beside the bones of seventeen of his brethren[1]. This would imply a very abnormal mortality indeed among the comrades of Columban if we are to assume that all of them died within a period of twelve years. It was a hard climate, it is true, and they were liable to deadly fevers, but the men whom Columban trained were no saplings; they were the children of a virile race and the men he brought with him from Ireland had been inured to hardship at Bangor, all of which would lead us to expect Columban's monks to have been long-lived. If we extend the period to thirty years and place the foundation of Columban's first monastery in Gaul before 575, the mortality is not so surprising.

Hence, failing certainty, we are inclined to think that the early date for his arrival in Gaul, let us say 573-574 A. D., fits in best with the facts that we are sure of from other sources and with the traditions that are reflected both in Jonas and in the Life of St. Gall.

## V. Closing Years

The outstanding events of the last ten years of Colum-

[1] *Ep. Col. IV. M. G. H.* III, p. 162.

ban's life present no difficulty, since they can be gathered with accuracy both from Jonas and from independent sources. We know, for instance, that his expulsion from Luxeuil took place in 610, three years before Clothaire became sole ruler of the Frankish kingdoms. Columban had prophesied the event and the time, and Fredegar, a contemporary chronicler, gives us the date. We know that he spent 611 and up to May, 612, at Bregenz on the shores of Lake Constance, for on the latter date, according to Fredegar, the Battle of Tolbiac was fought, which placed Columban again in Theuderic's power and made it necessary for him to move on over the Alps. We can infer that he reached Milan before the winter of that year and remained there for over a year and a half, until the summer of 614, when he founded Bobbio. We know that he died on November 23rd, 615.

From all this, it is possible for us to draw up with a very fair degree of probability the chronology of our saint's life. It is not without its difficulties, but it seems to agree best with the traditions that Jonas reflects, even though he may not have expressed them accurately, and also with what we know of the history of Columban's life-long friend and companion, St. Gall.

## VI. Chronology of St. Columban's Life

| A.D. | | Age |
|---|---|---|
| 529 | Date of birth. | |
| 550 | Became a pupil of Sinnell at Cleenish in Lough Erne. | 21 |
| 559 | Entered Bangor with Comgall. | 30 |
| 560 | Ordained priest at Bangor by St. Finnian, Bishop of Moville, and became spiritual director and master of discipline. | 31 |
| 572 | Began his missionary career. | 43 |
| 573 | Arrived in Gaul. Traveled eastwards through Neustria into Austrasia. | 44 |
| 574 | News of his preaching reached King Sigibert. Founded Annegray. | 45 |
| 590 | Foundation of Luxeuil when Annegray became overcrowded with monks. | 61 |
| 594 | Foundation of Fontaines to cope with a further influx of monks. | 65 |
| 600 | Easter Controversy became acute. Columban wrote his letter to Pope St. Gregory the Great. | 71 |
| 603 | Arraigned before the Council of Chalons on account of the Easter celebration. Letter to the Bishops of Gaul. | 74 |
| 604 | Letter to Pope Sabinian on the Easter question. | 75 |
| 610 | Expulsion from Luxeuil. Journey to Nantes and back to Paris, Metz and Mayence on the Rhine. | 81 |
| 611 | Began his mission at Bregenz among the Alemannians. | 82 |
| 612 | Crossed the Alps into Italy during the summer-time. Arrived at the court of the King of Lombardy in Milan in the early autumn. | 83 |
| 613 | Letter to Pope St. Boniface on the Three Chapters controversy. His campaign against the Arians. | 84 |
| 614 | The foundation of Bobbio either in the spring or summer. | |
| 614 | The visit of St. Eustace with Clothaire's invitation to come back to Luxeuil, late summer. | 85 |
| 615 | November 23rd, death. | 86 |

## III

## MEROVINGIAN GAUL

### I. The Kingdoms of the Franks

THE History of the Franks by St. Gregory of Tours[1] and the Treaty of Andelot[2] are our chief sources for the history and geography of Merovingian Gaul as Columban found it. Many volumes have been written by French and German scholars, identifying the places mentioned by Gregory with modern towns of France. These scholars are entirely agreed on the main features of the geography of Gaul at this period and also as regards the location of its principal towns and cities. It is not quite so easy, however, to locate the exact political boundaries of the various kingdoms, since the Frankish kings did not set up definite boundary lines, but held suzerainty over the richest cities and districts that they could procure for themselves by war or treaty.

But who and what were those Merovingian kings with whose fortune Columban's life was cast for nearly forty years, and who after his death fostered the institutions he and his comrades had founded?

When he landed in Gaul, Columban came into a Christian country, at least in name. Almost a century earlier, at the Battle of Zülpich, A.D. 496, Clovis, the grandson of Merovig, founder of the Merovingian dynasty, then a pagan, vowed to embrace the faith of his Catholic wife, St. Clothilda[3], if God would give him victory over the

[1] *Historia Francorum*, edited by Réné Poupardin, Picard, Paris, 1913.
[2] A. D. 587. *Hist. Fr.* Lib. IX, c. XX, p. 367. Andelot (Andelaus), a town on the frontier between Burgundy and Austrasia.
[3] The niece of a Burgundian prince, Gundobald.

Alemannians. He gained a decisive victory, which established the supremacy of the Franks and led to the baptism by St. Remigius, Bishop of Rheims, of Clovis and some three thousand of his soldiers and their families[1]. In this way the Franks were converted to the Catholic faith, but the civilizing influence of Christianity had only begun. It took more than three hundred years—that is, until the reign of Charlemagne, crowned Emperor of the West in A.D. 800—for Europe to recover fully from the effects of the invasion, and for the culture that had been preserved and developed in its monastic institutions to begin to make itself felt among the people. Sanctity ultimately triumphed in a world that had long been deaf to its inspirations.

The scene of Columban's labors in Gaul opened, according to our chronology, during the reign of the grandsons of Clovis, namely, Sigibert of Austrasia, Gunthran of Burgundy and Chilperic of Neustria. About 558 his youngest son, Clothaire I, who had survived his brothers, united under his sway the kingdoms that Clovis had established and which had been previously divided among his sons after his death in A.D. 511. This kingdom comprised that part of ancient Gaul occupied in Caesar's time by the Belgae and the Celtae, that is, the country bounded on the north and east by the Rhine, the Jura and the Alps, and extending on the south along the valley of the Gironde. Aquitania, south of the Gironde, had not at that time come under the sway of the Merovingians.

After the death of Clothaire I, his four sons, Charibert, Gunthran, Chilperic and Sigibert, agreed among themselves, according to Gregory of Tours[2] to divide their father's kingdom. The kingdom of Childebert I

[1]Guggenberger, *Church History*, Vol. I, p. 82.
[2]*Hist. Fr.* Lib. IV, c. XV, p. 124.

fell to Charibert, who established his court at Paris. Gunthran received the kingdom of his uncle Clovimir, and made Orleans his capital. Chilperic succeeded his father Clothaire in the Kingdom of Neustria and established himself at Soissons, while Sigibert received the kingdom of Theuderic I and made Rheims his capital. The exact boundaries of this division are very uncertain and were continually changing during the fratricidal wars that went on between the sons of Clothaire and their descendants for nearly half a century. Up to the death of Charibert, however, who died in A. D. 567, little change had taken place, and we may set down the location of these four kingdoms with substantial accuracy as follows:

1. The Kingdom of Paris stretched along the western seaboard from the Somme in the north to the Gironde in the south, and for some distance along the coast of Aquitania. Armorica or Brittany, however, which is geographically a part of this kingdom, does not seem to have been ever conquered by the Franks. The chief towns of the Kingdom of Paris were Paris, Meaux, Rouen, Evreux, Rennes and Nantes, and in Aquitania, Saintes, Poitiers and Bordeaux[1].

2. The Kingdom of Orleans and Burgundy extended along both banks of the Loire eastwards from Angers to Auxerre and southwards along the valley of the Saône and the Rhone, a territory formerly occupied by the Burgundians during the whole of the fifth century. The kingdom thus extended from the Jura and the Alps on the east to the Cevennes on the west and beyond the Plateau of Langres into the Loire valley as far as Angers, and from the forest of the Vosges[2] on the north

[1]Koeppen, *The World in the Middle Ages*, p. 31.
[2]Longnon, *Géographie de la Gaule*, pp. 153-154.

to the confluence of the Rhone and the Durance on the south[1]. Its chief towns were Orleans, Angers, Auxerre, Besançon, Chalons-sur-Saône, Geneva, Vienne and Avignon. Bourges at this time was occupied by the Gaulish king, Clodomir[2].

3. The Kingdom of Neustria extended from Soissons on the south to the sea on the north, through modern Belgium, and on the east it extended as far as the Meuse valley and the forest of Ardennes. Its chief towns were Soissons, Tournai, Therouanne, Cambrai, Amiens, Laon, and in Aquitania the King of Neustria held the cities of Limoges and Perigeux[3].

4. The Kingdom of Austrasia, the most extensive of the four, comprised all the eastern provinces of the Franks from Cologne on the north along both banks of the Rhine and southwards across the Vosges and the Jura into Helvetia at the foot of the Swiss Alps. It thus occupied the homeland of the Franks—Franconia and Thuringia and also Alemannia and Swabia. In Aquitania the King of Austrasia held Toulouse, the former capital of the Visigoths on the Gironde, and some neighboring towns. The chief cities of Austrasia were Rheims, Metz, Trèves, Châlons-sur-Marne, Troyes, Clermont, and in Aquitania, Cahors, Rodez and Alby[4].

The Kingdom of Paris had ceased to exist as a distinct kingdom in the time of St. Columban. When Charibert died his kingdom was again divided among his surviving brothers. The part of it that lay north of the Loire was given to Chilperic of Neustria, whose kingdom now stretched along the coast from the Loire to the Rhine and included the cities of Meaux, Rouen,

[1]Guiraud, *La Burgondie à l'arrivée de Saint Colomban*, p. 6.
[2]Koeppen, *Ibid.*
[3]*Op. Cit.*, Ibid.
[4]Koeppen, *Op. Cit.*, Ibid.

Rennes and Evreux. The section south of the Loire was added to the kingdom of Gunthran together with the cities of Saintes, Angoulême, Perigeux and Agen in Aquitania. Sigibert of Austrasia received Avranches on the borders of Neustria and added to his already vast kingdom the cities of Tours, Poitiers, Auvergne, Bordeaux and the port of Marseilles.[1]

After the assassination of Sigibert in A.D. 575, his son Childebert, then a boy of only eight years, succeeded him, with his mother Brunechildis as regent and his uncle Gunthran as guardian. Later, when Childebert became of age, Gunthran and he entered into a treaty at Andelot by which they settled their shares of the inheritance of the kingdom of Charibert and fixed the limits of their respective kingdoms.[2] From this date Austrasia and Burgundy became virtually one kingdom, and when Gunthran died in A.D. 593, Childebert became the ruler of both. At his death in 596 his kingdom was again divided between his sons, Theudebert and Theuderic. Gunthran in later years lived at Chalons-sur-Saône and Childebert had moved his court to Metz before A.D. 585.[3]

When Chilperic died in 584 his son, Clothaire II, then a boy twelve years old, succeeded him under the regency of his mother Fredegunde. Although the two queen regents of Neustria and Austrasia were bitter enemies, the good services of Gunthran as uncle and guardian for his orphaned nephews, seem to have preserved the peace between them until his death, when the feuds broke out anew, and under the stress of hostility from his cousins, the sons of Brunechildis, Clothaire's king-

[1]Putz, *Medieval Geography*, p. 21.
[2]Koeppen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.
[3]*Hist. Fr.* Lib. VIII, c. XXXVI, p. 333.

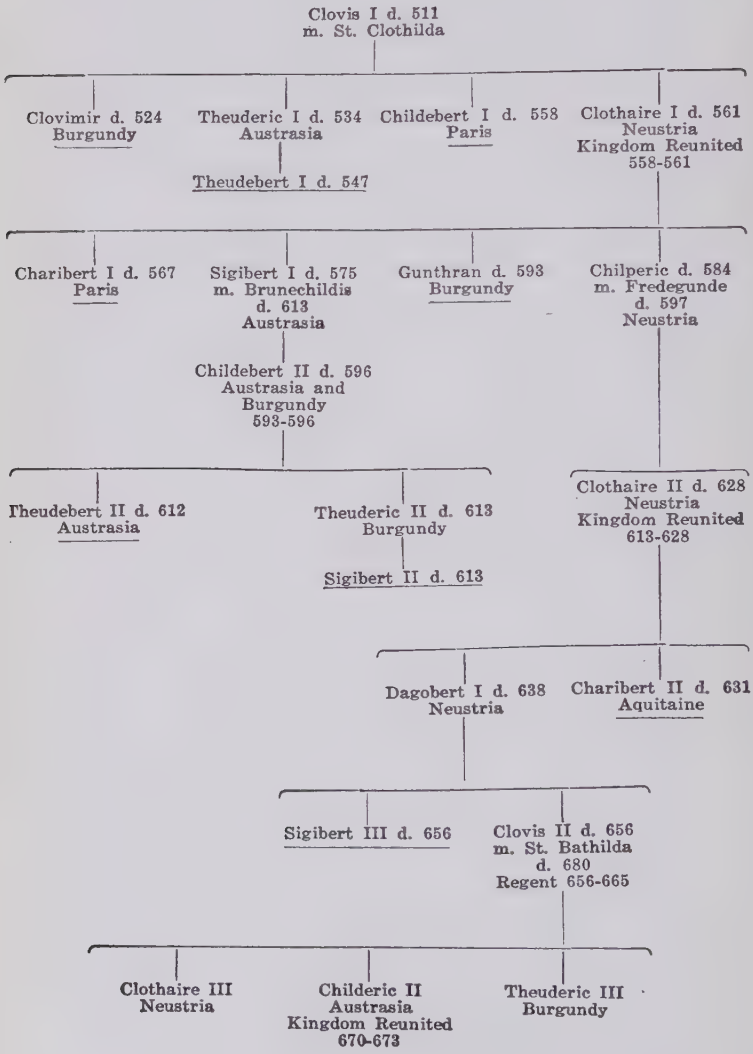
dom dwindled to a small territory along the seaboard north of the Seine.

This was the situation in A.D. 610 when Columban visited the court of Neustria. Three years later the fortunes of war turned in favor of Clothaire, and with the defeat and death of his cousins he became sole ruler of the Frankish kingdoms, which he ruled until 628. After his death he was succeeded by his sons Dagobert I and Charibert II. The latter died a few years later, in A.D. 631. The reign of Dagobert is marked by the rise to power of Pepin of Landen, the ancestor of the Carlovingian dynasty which a century later completely replaced that of the Merovingians.[1] Dagobert was succeeded in 638 by his sons Sigibert III and Clovis II. After the death of the latter in 556, his wife, St. Bathilda, became queen regent during the minority of his sons. She introduced several reforms, abolished slavery of Christians and established many monasteries and convents during her regency. In 665 she relinquished her charge and became a nun in the convent of Chelles, which she had founded, and where she died in A.D. 680.

It was during the reigns of Clothaire, Dagobert and Bathilda that the Columban institutions made their greatest progress. Clothaire had been a personal friend of the saint and always revered his memory. Dagobert was no less a friend to the Celtic traditions. In the charter of Corbie, founded by St. Bathilda, the rule of St. Columban is expressly mentioned.[2] No less than forty monasteries, which afterwards became famous throughout the Middle Ages, were founded during this period, all of which were directly due to the influence of the great Celtic missionary.

[1]Guggenberger, *Church History*, p. 116.
[2]Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* V, Intro.

## II. The Merovingian Dynasty 511-673



## IV.

## "IN JOURNEYING OFTEN."

### I. Ireland to Gaul.

LEAVING an Irish harbor, undoubtedly that of Bangor, from which there was then a regular trade communication with Gaul, St. Columban and his companions came, as Jonas tells us, "by prospering winds over a dangerous course to the ports of Britain."[1] Here they spent a short time recuperating their strength and laying their plans for the future. Finally they decided to preach the Gospel in Gaul and to attempt to arouse the hearts of its people to fervor in the faith.

The narrative as told by Jonas indicates that Columban had serious misgivings about the reception he was likely to receive in Gaul, for he adds that "if there was a hope of sowing the seeds of salvation among the people, they would remain for some time among them, but if their souls were clouded with the mists of pride, they would pass on to neighboring nations."[2] Then, leaving the British ports again, they direct their course towards Gaul.[3]

Continuing the paragraph, Jonas briefly describes the life and missionary work of Columban and his monks as they traveled through the country, and in the next chapter goes on to say that "the fame of Columban's

[1] "Prosperantibus zepherorum flabris pernici cursu ad Brittanicos perveniunt sinus." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 4.

[2] Ibid. "Ad vicinas nationes pertransire." That this missionary idea was always uppermost in Columban's mind is clear also from the letter he wrote to his brethren from Nantes in A. D. 610.

[3] "A Brittanicis ergo sinibus progressi ad Gallias tendunt." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 5.

preaching reached the court of King Sigibert, who was at that time the renowned ruler of the two Frankish kingdoms of the Austrasians and Burgundians. . . . The king began to beg of him to remain within the territories of Gaul and not to pass farther on to other nations." At last Columban consented to the king's persuasion and sought a site for his monastery in the wilderness of the Vosges.[1]

Much has been written by scholars on this, the first step of St. Columban's itinerary, and on the interpretation that we should give to the phrase "ad Brittanicos perveniunt sinus." Many leading authorities on the *Columbiana* favor the view that he landed first on the west coast of Great Britain, stayed there a short time and again either took ship from the same port or, having crossed the island towards the south, sailed from some southern harbor across the English Channel and landed at Cherbourg or Boulogne.[2]

Others maintain that he sailed direct from Ireland to the coast of Brittany over some regular trade route, and that the British ports or gulfs referred to are those formed by the archipelago on the southern coast of Brittany near Nantes.[3] In the time of St. Columban that peninsula in western France formerly called Armorica (modern Brittany) had become a refuge for British Christians who fled from the persecution following the Anglo-Saxon invasions. When Jonas wrote, the adjective "Brittanicus" or "British" was used to describe this peninsula and its inhabitants as well as Great Britain. It never seems to have come directly under the sway of

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 6.

[2]For example, Gougaud in *The Celtic Review* V, p. 171, "An Obscure Point in the Itinerary of St. Columban." Also such authorities as Abbe Martin, Archbishop Healy and Bishop Shahan.

[3]Bruno Krusch, note, Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 5. Concannon, *Life of St. Columban*, p. 98 and 295.

any of the Frankish kings and it has preserved its distinctiveness even to the present day.[1]

There are two other passages in Jonas where he used the adjective "Brittanicus," but they do not throw much light on the subject. They can be interpreted to apply to either Brittany or Great Britain with equal plausibility. The first is where he relates how Theuderic, the King of Burgundy, when banishing Columban from his kingdom, refused to allow any of his monks to accompany him except those who were natives of Ireland or who had followed him from British territory,[2] and the second is that which tells us that his guards as they brought him down the Loire expected to find a boat at Nantes on which he could be sent back to a British port.[3] The latter expression seems to indicate that in the writer's mind the adjective "British" referred not to the sea in the immediate vicinity of the coast of Brittany, but to the sea surrounding Great Britain or some harbor or sea through which Columban would sail on his homeward journey. It was the intention of the king and his servants to deport him back to his own country, and not merely to set him down off the coast of Brittany.

We must look outside the text of Jonas for some indication of the actual course followed by St. Columban during this first stage of his wanderings. We find an

[1]In the History of the Franks by St. Gregory of Tours (d. 590) we have counted at least twenty references to "Brittania" and "Brittani," all of them clearly referring to Brittany and the British refugees who had settled there. He has no reference to the island of Great Britain.

The *Vita Richarii* by Alcuin (d. 804), *Acta SS. O. S. B. II*, p. 192, relates of the missionary labors of St. Riquier "in ultramarinas Brittaniae regiones," and it is evident from the narrative that Great Britain is meant.

[2]"A Brittanica arva ipsum secuti fuerant." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 20.

[3]"Ut Ligeris scafa reciperetur Brittanicoque sinu redderetur." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 21.

eleventh century tradition in Hariulf's Chronicle of St. Riquier[1] that two of Columban's companions[2] who had come with him from Ireland had preached through the country near Centule in the valley of the Somme.[3] These Irish monks, according to the tradition, were badly treated by the people among whom they preached and took refuge in the house of a nobleman named Riquier who afterwards became a priest and a missionary in northern France and Britain. About the year 625, St. Riquier founded a monastery at Centule and adopted the Rule and spirit of St. Columban.[4]

Although the extant record of this tradition is some five hundred years later than the event, yet we may believe that, as in the case of other old traditions, it is based on a still older one, the source of which has been lost. Apart from such a tradition it would be difficult to explain how St. Riquier came under the influence of St. Columban and his spirit, and there is plenty of evidence in the history of Centule that such an influence existed.[5] Traditions of this kind must have been very carefully handed down in these early monasteries where

[1]Hariulf, *Chronicon Centulense,* a chronicle of the Abbey of St. Riquier from the fifth century to 1104, published by Ferdinand Lot, Paris, 1894. Hariulf was born near Centule where he afterwards became a monk. He died as Abbot of Oudensburg. A number of historical and hagiographical works have come down to us under his name.

[2]SS.Caidoc and Fricor are the names of these Irish priests given by Alcuin, *Vita Richarii, Acta SS. O.S.B.* II, p. 187.

[3]"There is a tradition that with him (Columban) they (the Irish priests Chaydoc and Fricor, called Hadrian) also came hither across the seas, and these we understand were diverted to our locality." *Chronicon Centulense* I, c. VI, p. 16—Lot.

[4]*Chronicon Centulense* I, c. XV. He was a young man when he first met Columban's companions, an event that the Chronicler of Centule affirms was in the reign of Sigibert (*Ch. Cen.* c. VI), i.e. before 575.

[5]According to a letter written in 1673 by Victor Croton, Abbot of St. Riquier, the relics of SS. Caidoc and Fricor were preserved at St. Riquier at that time. *Chronicon Centulense,*—Lot, Appendix II, p. 293. The relics of St. Columban were preserved there in the time of Hariulf (1060-1143). *Chron. Cen.* Book II, p. 65.

they had so few books of history or reference[1]. They did not arise from mere imagination, but reflected some generally accepted historical fact. Consequently, we can not afford to overlook the Centule tradition and we may find in it the key to solving this obscure point of St. Columban's journey.

Although the tradition does not imply that St. Columban ever visited the Somme valley himself, still it seems to indicate that he and his companions landed somewhere in that region along the coast of what is now the English Channel, and that two of his companions, Caidoc and Fricor, turning northwards, came to the mouth of the Somme.

We have not sufficient data to determine definitely the actual landing place of St. Columban in Gaul. Boulogne, Cherbourg and Belle Ile in Brittany all have their advocates. Cherbourg seems out of the question, because the promontory on which it is situated held a colony of Saxons at the time and would not, consequently, be a favorable landing place for either an Irish or British Celt. Boulogne would agree admirably with the Centule tradition, but beyond that there seems to be no good reason for supposing that Columban landed there. In favor of Belle Ile there is the presence of Bangor as a place name on that island, but this Bangor was more than likely founded by some of the Cambrian monks who were driven out from Bangor in Wales by the Saxon invaders.

There is yet another place which, it would seem, has even a better claim to the honor. Not far from the shore

[1]In his preface to the Life of St. Mauguille, Hariulf himself tells us how carefully (studiose) these traditions were preserved and handed down at Centule from one generation to the other, and that the Abbot Angelrannus (d. 1045) made a special effort to collect these old traditions and documents bearing on them.

of the Gulf of St. Malo, on the northern coast of Brittany, there is a little village called St. Coulomb where there was an ancient church dedicated to St. Peter.[1] The name and the title of the church both suggest a connection with St. Columban, who dedicated his churches at Luxeuil and Bobbio to the Prince of the Apostles. If, as the Centule tradition leads us to think, Columban landed somewhere on the northwestern coast of France or Brittany, the region around this little hamlet that still bears his name has at least a strong presumption in its favor. He would therefore have crossed over there from the coast of Great Britain.[2]

We may safely assume that he did not sail from any port on the eastern coast of that country, which was then occupied by the Anglo-Saxons. By the middle of the sixth century they had driven the British Christians to the extreme western part of the island into the mountains of Wales and Cornwall or across the sea into Brittany and Ireland. Their cruelty and savage treatment of the Britons would naturally deter Columban from traveling through their country, for he, like the Britons, was also a Celt, speaking a similar language. Before he crossed over into Gaul, Jonas tells us that he and his companions weighed their plans with great anxiety.[3] Perhaps at first they thought of preaching to the Saxons and when this project seemed hopeless they decided to cross over to Gaul. Hence Columban must have left Britain from some port along the coast of Wales or

[1]This interesting fact was first brought to my attention by Canon Thiébaut, the present pastor of Luxeuil, who is himself a strong advocate for the "St. Coulomb" theory.

[2]"A Brittanicis ergo sinibus progressi ad Gallias tendunt." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 5. After all, Brittany was geographically a part of Gaul and this was Columban's objective.

[3]"Ancipitique animo anxis cordis consilia trutinantur." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 4.

Cornwall. If he landed in the Gulf of St. Malo, the latter is more likely, and Plymouth the more probable port of embarkation.

To support this theory we find an ancient place name of St. Colomb[1] on the west coast of the Cornish headland near the modern town and harbor of Newquay, which we would like to think embodies a tradition of the sojourn of our saint among the hunted Christians of Britain. We can not assume, of course, that a tradition sufficiently strong to reflect itself in a place name could arise in the brief time to which our narrative must limit Columban's stay. But might not such a tradition be definitely fixed by some one of his companions who remained behind to minister to a persecuted people so closely united by ties of race, for, whether Britons or Irish, they were all Celts? Or, what is more probable still, might not the name have owed its origin to one of those Breton monks who had been expelled with Columban from Luxeuil? These would naturally have come back to their own people in Cornwall and Brittany and might be expected to establish there the tradition of the Saint's sojourn among them[2]. We are well aware of the opinion held by some that both St. Columb and St. Coulomb across the English Channel in Brittany derived their names from the Apostle of Scotland or some other Irish saint of that name. It seems far more likely, however, apart from positive proof, that the tradition behind these place names belongs to St. Columban, of whom the Chronicler of Centule, a short distance

[1]St. Columb Major and Minor. See Andrees' Atlas, 103-104.

[2]The memory of St. Columban's work among the Britons is reflected in a passage from a letter written (during Columban's life time) from England to Pope St. Gregory by Laurentius, a bishop and companion of St. Augustine, "Columbanum abbatem in Galliis venientem nihil discrepare a Britonibus in eorum conversatione didicimus." Bede, *Hist. Lib. II*, c. IV.

away, wrote in the eleventh century that his brilliancy and remarkable virtues were famous throughout the whole of Gaul[1].

From the days of St. Patrick and St. David, the religious and cultural relations between Ireland and Wales were exceedingly close[2]. Irish scholars flocked across the sea to the British monasteries of St. David, Bangor on the Dee and Candida Casa, while British monks were to be found in large numbers in all the great Irish schools. So that it is not improbable that Columban after crossing the Irish Sea should visit Britain, the land from which so many of his predecessors among the saints of Ireland had received their learning[3].

Taking into account the text of Jonas, the history and social conditions at the time in Ireland, Great Britain and Gaul, the tradition of Centule and the place names in Cornwall and Brittany, the most consistent view seems to be that Columban sailed first to Great Britain and from there to Brittany. Jonas would therefore intend the phrase "ad Brittanicos sinus" to indicate those gulfs and inlets of the sea that surround the coasts of Wales and Cornwall. Then "leaving the harbors of Britain," he says, "they direct their course to Gaul." Brittany is really in Gaul geographically and Jonas might be expected to speak of it that way. On the theory that Columban sailed directly to Brittany from Ireland, this statement of Jonas would have no meaning. We must remember that Jonas was familiar

[1] "Ex quibus (sanctis Hiberniae) beatus quoque Columbanus homo Scotici generis floruit cuius laudabilis conversatio virtusque eximia totius Galliae loca respersit." *Chronicon Centulense*, I. VI, p. 16.

[2] Montalembert, *Monks of the West, Eng. Ed.* p. 661. sqq.

[3] St. Finnian of Clonard, from whom Sinnell, Columban's first teacher, received his education, studied at St. David's in Wales. St. Finnian of Moville, who probably ordained Columban, studied at Candida Casa. Archbishop Healy, *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, pp. 166, 195, 246.

with the geography of the coastline of northwestern France, because he had traveled through the monasteries that sprang up there in later years and had worked for some time as a missionary around the mouth of the Scheldt.

## II. Rheims or Orleans?

Landing in the Gulf of St. Malo near St. Coulomb, our pilgrim, traveling inland, would soon meet the Roman road leading northwards from Nantes and crossing the Seine at Rouen. From this point, other roads branched off to Soissons and Rheims, the royal seats, respectively, of the Kingdoms of Neustria and Austrasia.[1]

During the course of Columban's missionary labors, Jonas tells us that "his fame reached the court of King Sigibert, who at that time was the illustrious ruler of the kingdoms of the Austrasians and Burgundians." This tradition, which Jonas undoubtedly learned from Columban's companions, was a very definite one and is repeated still more definitely later on[2]. Mabillon[3] and other scholars following him think that Jonas must have been mistaken, because Sigibert never ruled in Burgundy and could not have granted Columban the royal land at Annegray, which, they assure us, was then part of the kingdom over which Gunthran ruled.[4]

[1]According to St. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Fr. Lib. IV*, c. XV, p. 124, Sigibert took up his residence at Rheims after the death of Clothaire I in 561. At the outbreak of the civil war in 575, the first attack from Sigibert's two brothers was made against the city of Rheims, and the appointment of St. Gregory himself as Bishop of Tours was confirmed by Sigibert from Rheims in 573. (Collon, Introduction, *Historia Francorum*, first edition.) Metz is not mentioned by St. Gregory as the seat of the Kings of Austrasia until 585. *Hist. Fr. Lib. VIII*, c. XXXVI, p. 333, Picard et Fils, Paris.

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 18.

[3]*Acta SS. O. S. B. II, Vita Columbani*, p. 10, note a.

[4]See Chronology II, p. 180.

It would seem, however, that had Columban been received by Gunthran, who was one of the best and most favorably known of the Frankish kings of the time and who reigned for so long a period (A.D. 561 to A.D. 593), Jonas could not have missed such a remarkable tradition. Besides, he had before him, as Bruno Krusch points out, the history of Gregory of Tours and must have been familiar with the social and political conditions of the period. His repeated reference to Sigibert is so definite as to place beyond question the possibility of having made a slip, such as writing "Sigibert" for "Childebert."[1] He reflects some well-known tradition of his time and we can not afford to overlook a tradition handed down to us by such an excellent historian as Jonas.

The fact that the Centule tradition connects Columban's followers with St. Riquier and the locality along the Somme valley leads us to suspect that his course lay northwards through Rouen into the country between the Seine and the Somme. This is an additional reason for accepting the statement of Jonas that he was first received by King Sigibert of Austrasia, whose palace at Rheims was in that neighborhood. The rejection of his brethren and possibly of himself also by the people beyond the Seine may have decided him to leave the Franks and pass on to neighboring peoples, as he had intended to do before he left Great Britain. According to Jonas, King Sigibert prevailed on him not to pass on to other peoples, as if Columban had previously declared this to be his intention.

He suggested as a location for his new monastery a

[1]Mabillon regards it as unlikely that Jonas merely made a slip.

remote desert place at the foot of the Vosges.[1] The place selected for Columban's new monastery was the site of an old Roman settlement called Anagrates. It was about one hundred and twenty miles south of Rheims, along the Roman road that in early days was a part of the highway that crossed the Alps from Italy over the Great St. Bernard and, passing through Besançon, Luxeuil, Langres and Rheims, was the chief route for commercial and military transportation to northwestern Gaul, Boulogne and Great Britain.[2] The locality around Annegray and Luxeuil is rich in mineral springs and in Roman days was a favorite health resort, famous for its baths, as it is today among the people of eastern France. The neglect and decay that had come with the barbarian invasions had reduced the town to ruins and the country around to an uninhabited desert. It was in this condition when Columban found it.

According to our chronology, Columban spent some fifteen or sixteen years at Annegray, instructing and preaching to the people in the neighborhood. We do not think that this is too long a time to allow for the work he had to accomplish and for the results obtained. From a wild, lawless race, the people to whom he preached changed so far as to supply vocations for his monastery until in A.D. 590 it became so crowded that he had to seek another foundation, first at Luxeuil and then at Fontaines, a few miles distant.[3] Luxeuil in a short time eclipsed both Annegray and Fontaines and became Columban's principal monastery and the most enduring

[1] "Data itaque obtione, obtemperavit regis persuasionibus heremum petiit." Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 6.

[2] *La Burgondie à l'arrivée de Saint Colomban*, Professor Guiraud, p. 6. (Luxeuil.)

[3] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 10.

monument of the three. It remained for many centuries a center of intellectual and religious influence in France.[1]

### III. His Second Pilgrimage.

In the meantime, the princes who knew and respected Columban had passed away and the two sons of Childebert reigned in their stead, Theudebert in Austrasia and Theuderic in Burgundy, and Luxeuil was within the latter's kingdom. As the boy king grew to manhood and, like so many of the other Merovingian princes, became a profligate, a long struggle began between him and the saint, which ended, as such struggles frequently end, in the temporary triumph of worldly power. Columban was expelled from Luxeuil and ordered to be deported back to his native land. He was sent under armed guard to Nantes. Thus began his second wandering in the year 610, twenty years after the foundation of Luxeuil.[2]

This time we have more definite information about the places he visited on his road of sorrow, for Jonas gives them one by one and proves himself to have a very accurate knowledge of the topography of Gaul. His description of the neighborhood of Besançon, for instance, would be correct even today.[3] All the towns mentioned by Jonas still exist under modern names so that we can trace with accuracy Columban's journey across central France to the coast via Besançon, Autun,

[1]Devastated by the Saracens in 732, Luxeuil was rebuilt under Charlemagne but sacked again by the Normans in the ninth century. The abbots of Luxeuil were temporal princes of the Holy Roman Empire till 1594. The monastery was finally suppressed at the time of the French Revolution in 1790. The seminary for the archdiocese of Besançon occupies its site now. *L'Abbaye de Luxeuil*—Beaumont, Luxeuil 1912.

[2]Jonas, Vita Columbani, I. 20.

[3]Montalembert, *Monks of the West, Eng. Ed.* p. 561, note, characterizes Jonas' description as "strikingly correct" even in his day.

Saulieu, Avallon, Auxerre and Nevers.[1] His presence in each of these towns was marked by some miracle or other event carefully recorded by Jonas. From Nevers he traveled by boat to Orleans, thence to Tours, where he visited the tomb of St. Martin, and finally reached Nantes.[2]

Here he found a boat ready to set sail for Ireland. Columban's companions went on board while he remained on land, intending, as he said, to join them from a small boat as soon as they put out to sea. However, no sooner had the ship weighed anchor than it was cast back again on the shore. At the end of three days Columban's companions and their belongings were sent ashore and the boat sailed away, leaving Columban free to go where he wished.[3] He had no desire to go back to Ireland.[4] Now at last he would go eastwards to preach to those other peoples of whom he had thought so frequently.[5]

He could not return through Theuderic's kingdom, and so he directed his steps northwards through that part of Neustria which had recently been ceded to Theudebert of Austrasia. After the wars of 603-604, which the brothers Theuderic and Theudebert waged against their cousin Clothaire, the son of Chilperic, the Kingdom of Neustria had dwindled to a small territory north of the Seine, but with Soissons still as its capital. Anjou and the country between the Seine and the Loire as far as Brittany were annexed by Theudebert. Columban would thus travel through the latter's kingdom as far

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 21.
[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 22.
[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 23.
[4]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 20. When the henchman of the king asked him to leave Luxeuil of his own free will, he answered: "I do not think it would please my Creator if I were to return to my native land after having left it for the love of Christ."
[5]*Epistola Columbani IV, M. G. H. III.* p. 167.

as Rouen. Beyond the Seine he was within the protection of Clothaire, whom he was evidently anxious to meet. Clothaire invited him to remain within his kingdom, but Columban refused. He had other work to do. Although he stayed at Soissons but a few days, he took occasion during that time to reprimand the king for some disorders in his court that Clothaire promised to correct. He also repeated the prophecy already made on his journey to Nantes, that in three years Clothaire would rule over all the Merovingian kingdoms, a prophecy that was remarkably fulfilled in due time.[1]

Leaving Soissons, he obtained a bodyguard from Clothaire to conduct him to Metz, then the royal seat of the King of Austrasia. His route brought him southwards first to Paris[2] and then eastwards along the Marne to Meaux where he called at the home of Chagneric, and to Ussy (Vulciacum) where he met the family of Autharius.[3] Leaving the Marne, his road lay across the Meuse through the valley between the Plateau of Langres and the Forest of Ardennes or Arduenna, as it was then called. At Metz he was well received by Theudebert and there he met also some of his companions who had come from Luxeuil to see him.[4]

From Metz he traveled down the Moselle to where it flows into the Rhine at Coblenz. It is clear from Jonas that he embarked below Mayence (Mainz), for he relates an incident that implies that he had reached the latter town after traveling up the Rhine by boat.[5] Continuing his journey along the upper Rhine, he crossed

[1] A. D. 613. Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 24.
[2] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 25.
[3] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 26.
[4] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 27. St. Arnulf afterwards Bishop of Metz was at this time Mayor of the Palace.
[5] "Dum quodam die per Reni alveum, ut diximus, scafa veherentur, ad urbem, quam Mogontiacum veteres appellarunt, perveniunt."

over Lake Constance to Bregenz, which was still within the territory of Theudebert. Here he settled for a year and a half, preaching among the Alemannians with St. Gall and a few other comrades who had followed him from Luxeuil.[1] His work at Bregenz brought him for the first time into direct contact with a purely pagan people. He was not, however, to end his days there, though he had reached his eightieth year, for God had still another pilgrimage in store for him.

## IV. Beyond the Alps.

In A.D. 612 Theuderic, who had banished Columban from Luxeuil, defeated his brother Theudebert at the second Battle of Tolbiac during one of those fratridical wars that disgrace the history of Merovingian France and show us the wild, savage hates and feuds that Columban had come to replace with the law of love. By this victory Theuderic gained possession of that part of his brother's kingdom where Columban had established his mission among the Alemannians, and the old exile was again forced to move still farther away from the hate of his enemy. At the same time, he received a vision from God in which an angel appeared to him and spread before him a map showing the nations of the earth, saying, "Turn to the right or to the left, which way thou wilt, but take care that thou eat the fruit of thy labors".[2] Columban had already thought of traveling eastwards into the Slav country, but now he interpreted this vision to indicate that these nations were not yet ripe for the faith, and decided instead to cross the Alps into Italy.

[1]Sigisbert and Athala. Chagnoald also followed him from the banks of the Marne.

[2]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 27. "Ut labores tui fructus comedas."

He crossed the Alps during the summer of 612, for according to a contemporary chronicler[1] the Battle of Tolbiac which made Theuderic master of Alemannia was fought in May of that year. Most probably he traveled over the Rhetian Alps through the Septimer Pass, then as in later times the most direct and frequented route between Bregenz and Italy. His only companion, as far as we know, was Athala. There is a tradition that St. Sigisbert, the founder of Disentis, and a comrade of St. Columban, had come with him probably as far as Chur, and then turning westward towards the source of the Rhine, founded his monastery at the foot of what is now called the St. Gotthard.[2] Columban and Athala continued their journey southwards where the Oberhalbstein Rhine has hollowed its way through the mountains from the northern end of the Septimer Pass. Immediately on the other side he entered the Val Bregaglia, another valley of one of those mountain streams that lose themselves in Lake Como. Then his route lay partly along the shores of the lake and partly across the foothills of the Alps down to the lowlands which separate them from the northern Apennines.

The Oberhalbstein valley is today somewhat off the main tourist route, but in earlier times it was the most direct road from Germany to Italy. The mountain range at the head of the valley is penetrated by three passes, the Septimer, the Julier and the Maloja. The Septimer is shorter and was used by pilgrims on foot. The ancient mule track, however, did not cross the Septimer, which was considered dangerous because of its steep sides and the prevalence of glaciers and avalanches. Travelers therefore more frequently used the

[1]Fredegar, IV. 38. Bruno Krusch, note, *Vita Columbani*, I. 28.
[2]Mabillon, *Ann. Ben. Lib. XI*, c. XX.

Julier Pass into the Engadine valley and then through the Maloja into the Val Bregaglia. Columban on foot would probably have taken the shorter though more dangerous road over the Septimer. The whole journey was not quite one hundred and fifty miles. Whatever changes have taken place in the rest of the world since Columban's day, we may be sure that there has been little change in the wild mountain passes over which he traveled during those summer days thirteen centuries ago.

At Milan Columban had come close to "the place of his resurrection," to use a favorite phrase of the Celtic monks. Bobbio was but another fifty miles to the south on the slopes of the Apennines. There on the banks of the Trebbia the old warrior of Christ, now in his eighty-fifty year, established his little "carcair" on the mountain side, where at last he could be at peace, and laid the foundation of another monastery that was destined later on to place one of its abbots in the Chair of St. Peter.[1] Here, too, a few months later they laid him in the crypt beneath the abbey church. From this little valley of the Apennines, where his memory is still revered, the influence of his learning and sanctity has gone out over the ages, to use the words of Pope Pius XI, "casting such a light upon history that it still illumines the world." Here at last he "ate the fruit of his labors."

[1]Gerbert, one of the forerunners of Scholastic philosophy, Archbishop of Rheims, and afterwards Pope Sylvester II (999-1003), was appointed Abbot of Bobbio in A. D. 983.

## V

## THE FRUIT OF HIS LABORS.

THE visible fruit of St. Columban's labors as a missionary and monk was reflected immediately after his death, both in the monasteries established by his disciples, trained at Luxeuil, and therefore directly under the influence of his spirit, and in the adoption of his Rule by other great monastic founders of the first half of the seventh century. There is evidence in the early annals that at least forty monasteries of this period, both for men and women, adopted his Rule, or at least lived according to that of St. Benedict as it was observed at Luxeuil.[1] Some of these attained outstanding distinction later as centers of monastic learning. Corbie, Fleury, St. Riquier and Jumièges are no meaningless names to the historians of Europe.[2] There were others, too, that owed their origin to his influence and though not quite so famous, nevertheless contributed their share to the general revival of faith and culture, which the monasteries guarded and developed so zealously and diffused so generously abroad.[3]

Luxeuil itself became a training ground for missionaries. It was Columban's powerful personality that first attracted them thither, and it was the prestige of his name and spirit living after him that made these

[1]Mabillon *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, Introduction v, sqq.

[2]The chronicles of these monasteries and the MSS. preserved there are the chief sources of European history of medieval times.

[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani* II. 10. "The bishops of Gaul devoted themselves to fostering the Columban institutions . . . many built monasteries out of devotion to St. Columban and under his Rule. . . . Eligius established many other monasteries in addition to Solignac."

Columban monasteries the centers from which the Church for centuries sought its bishops and teachers.[1] Many of his immediate followers and friends occupied important episcopal sees soon after his death, and effected far-reaching reforms in Church and state. Luxeuil was truly a "mother of monasteries," whose daughters were scattered far and wide through France, and Bobbio became a center that diffused learning and sanctity over northern Italy for over a thousand years.

Besides, Columban was the pioneer of that remarkable missionary movement in his native land, to which western Europe owes, in great part, its culture and Christian civilization. The monasteries that he and his disciples founded became an attraction for his countrymen when the zeal and apostolic spirit of their race sent them as teachers beyond the seas or when fleeing from the smoking ruins of their monasteries, during the Danish invasions, they sought refuge on the European continent, where Celtic traditions had already been so strongly established and respected. For three centuries they swarmed over the face of Europe—bishops, priests, monks, teachers, pilgrims and merchants. Everywhere and in every walk of life the influence of the Irish *peregrinus*[2] was felt, but most of all in the field of religion and education. Some occupied chairs of learning in the leading schools[3] others held positions of confidence in the courts of kings, and in the catalogues of the episcopal sees of France, Germany and Italy, we find many a distinguished Irish name.[4]

[1]Gougaud, *Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity*, p. 12 sqq.

[2]The word signified "a voluntary exile." A favorite phrase of the Irish missionaries was "peregrinari pro Christo"—"to make oneself an exile for the sake of Christ."

[3]*Irish Teachers in the Carolingian Revival*, Bishop Turner; *Catholic University Bulletin*, 1907: Gougaud's *Gaelic Pioneers*, p. 42.

[4]Gougaud, *Op. Cit.* p. 22.

But let us return to the monasteries that were imbued with the fervor of Columban's spirit. Stretching across Europe in a line from Bobbio to Boulogne, they followed almost exactly the course of his wanderings, and in quite a remarkable way appear most plentifully where his personal influence was greatest during his lifetime.

Annegray, Luxeuil and Fontaines in France, Bregenz in Germany and Bobbio in Italy were Columban's personal foundations. Annegray and Fontaines were soon eclipsed by Luxeuil, while his mission at Bregenz, as far as we know, ceased to exist after Columban had crossed the Alps. A Cistercian monastery was established there later and occupies its site today. The monastery of Bobbio is in ruins but the old basilica of St. Peter still stands and its crypt contains the tomb of St. Columban.

After Luxeuil and Bobbio, the most lasting monument to the influence of Columban and his comrades is the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland. Some have recently attempted to rob it of much of its Celtic character, but at least it must be admitted that its first inspiration came from the two great Irish apostles, who established the Faith in the country from which its children sprang and whose memory, even to the present day, is revered by the people. Although the later monastery did not come into existence until nearly a hundred years after the death of St. Columban's friend and companion, it is certain that in St. Gall's own lifetime he assembled there a small community and followed the Rule of his master. After his death the church he founded became a hermitage until in A.D. 720 the renowned monastery named after him was established by St. Othmar, who became its first abbot.[1]

[1] *The Abbey of St. Gall*, Clark, p. 2 sqq.

Before we leave the Alps, retracing the saint's footsteps, we find at Disentis under the shadow of St. Gotthard, another monument, which, better than the others, has stood the vicissitudes of time and the destruction of men. The tradition of Disentis is that it was founded by one of Columban's Irish companions, St. Sigisbert, a name not indeed indicative of Irish origin, but we know that it was not unusual for missionaries in those days, as now, to accept from the people names more consonant with the language and phonetics of the country where they worked. The monastery still stands as a Benedictine abbey and, true to the monastic tradition, is famous for its library.[1]

In the mountain fastnesses of the Jura, three monasteries were founded and peopled with colonies from Luxeuil soon after Columban's death. The first of these, St. Ursanne, was founded, according to tradition, by one of Columban's Irish companions from Bangor, who is known to us only as St. Ursicinus or Urson[2], a name given to him by the natives either because his first hermitage was a cave from which he had driven an unfriendly bear, or because he lived among the bears that infested the district where he had established his cell. The monastery of St. Ursanne rose soon after on its site. His successor, St. Germain, had been a monk at Luxeuil under its third abbot, St. Walbert, who sent him as the head of a colony of monks to found the new abbey of Grandval near St. Ursanne. St. Germain ruled both monasteries until his death.[3]

The foundation of the third monastery of the Jura group brings us back to Columban's first years at Luxeuil when Waldelenus, Duke of Besançon, and his wife

[1]See I, Chapter XVII, p. 70.
[2]See I, Chapter XXIII, p. 98. *Lat* ursus, a bear; hence Ursicinus.
[3]See I, Chapter XXIV, p. 100.

Flavia came to ask his blessing on their married life.[1] Donatus, their eldest son, became a monk at Luxeuil under Columban and afterwards Bishop of Besançon, where he founded the monastery of St. Paul. Later on, after the death of her husband, his mother founded the convent of Jussamoutier within her son's episcopal city. The more rigid features of Columban's Rule were strictly enforced under the discipline required by St. Donatus in the monasteries of his diocese. It was Ramelen, the younger brother of St. Donatus, who was responsible for the rebuilding of Condat[2] and introducing a colony of monks from Luxeuil there. It received the name Romainmoutier from its first founder, St. Romain.

Side by side with the family of Waldelenus was another family, that of his brother Amalgar, Duke of Burgundy, who also came under Columban's influence. To the children of this family, cousins of St. Donatus and Ramelen, the two monasteries of Bèze and Bregille owe their origin. Waldelin, the founder of Bèze, was a monk at Luxeuil and his sister, St. Adalsind, was the first abbess of Bregille, founded for her by her father Amalgar. Of this group of monastic foundations, Bèze was the most outstanding and for a long time held its place in the first rank of French monasteries.[3]

A short distance northeast of Besançon at the foot of the Jura another monastery called Cusance was founded by Ermenfried, also a monk of Luxeuil under Walbert. After his ordination to the priesthood, he became the head of a colony of thirty monks there and placed the new monastery under the jurisdiction of Luxeuil.[4]

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 26.

[2]Condat was one of the earliest of the Gallo-Roman monasteries. It was founded by St. Romain, who died about A. D. 460.

[3]See I, Chapter XXII, p. 91.

[4]See I, Chapter XXIII, p. 95.

In the immediate vicinity of Luxeuil are two monasteries, which complete what we may call the Vosges group. Lure, to the south, owes its origin to a fourth companion of St. Columban, who had followed him from Bangor. He was expelled with his master from Luxeuil, but owing to illness turned aside at the beginning of his journey and after many severe trials became the founder of the famous monastery that preserved his memory.[1] Remiremont was also founded by two monks from Luxeuil, St. Amatus and St. Romaric, on the latter's demesne at Habend, north of Luxeuil and nearer the Vosges.[2] There were two monasteries at Remiremont, one for monks and another for nuns. In later times the convent of nuns became the more famous of the two, and in the days of the Holy Roman Empire the abbess of Remiremont ranked as a princess. Both monasteries were placed under the Rule of St. Columban by their founders. St. Arnulf, Bishop of Metz and one of the founders of the Carlovingian line, became a monk at Remiremont in his later years.

Near the banks of the Marne east of Paris in the La Brie country, there arose a little group of famous monasteries, that owed their origin in a special way to the influence of Columban. We recall how, when he was traveling from Paris to Metz in A.D. 610, he visited the homes of Chagneric and Autherius, who lived at Meaux and Ussy.[3] Chagneric had a little daughter named Burgundofara, whom Columban blessed. He had two sons also, Chagnoald and Faron. Chagnoald followed the saint to Bregenz, then apparently returned to Luxeuil and finally became bishop of Laon. Faron became bishop of Meaux, while their sister Burgundofara be-

[1] See I, Chapter, XXI, p. 88.
[2] See I, Chapter XXXI, p. 129.
[3] Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 26.

came the foundress of the famous monastery for nuns later called Faremoutier.[1]

The children of Autherius were not less favored. Of these the most famous is St. Ouën, afterwards archbishop of Rouen, whose devotion has held its place in the hearts of the people of France to the present day.[2] He founded the abbey of Rebais and brought St. Agilus from Luxeuil as its first abbot, St. Ouën also endowed the monasteries of Jumièges and Fontenelle or St. Vandrille. His brother Adon founded Jouarre, while the third brother, Radon or Rueil, founded on the banks of the Marne another monastery which bore his name. Besides the original monastery at Jouarre, there sprang up also a convent for nuns, to which the daughters of the Anglo-Saxon chiefs flocked in later years to receive their training in monasticism and bring back to their own country those traditions that played so important a part in the spiritual life of medieval England.

In this neighborhood, too, was Altivillers, now Hautvillers, founded by St. Nivardus, Bishop of Rheims. The first abbot was Bercharius, a monk of Luxeuil trained by St. Walbert. The monks of Altivillers, according to Frodoardus[3], lived under the Rule of the fathers, SS. Benedict and Columban.[4] To the same Bercharius the monastery of Montier-en-Der in the same district owed its foundation. Frobert, another monk of Luxeuil, founded Moutier-la-Celle at the gates of Troyes. Farther south on the Yonne, a tributary of the Seine, in the city of Sens, Archbishop Emmon established the monastery of St. Peter and placed it under the Rule of Luxeuil.[5] Sens was long before this time famous for the tomb of

[1]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, II. 7.
[2]See I, Chapter XXVII, p. 109.
[3]Frodoardus, *History of Rheims*, I. 24.
[4]Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, p. 835.
[5]Mabillon, *Op. Cit.*, Intro. v.

St. Columba, a virgin martyr of the Gallo-Roman days, from whom many place names in southern France have been derived. About the same time Bishop Drausinus of Soissons in his charter to the monastery of Our Lady in his diocese, definitely prescribes that the Rule of St. Benedict must be observed according to the manner of the monastery of Luxeuil as St. Columban had established it.[1]

Corbie, founded by St. Bathilda, the wife of Clovis II, was another one of these monasteries, where the Rule of St. Columban, side by side with that of St. Benedict was expressly prescribed in the charter.[2] It was from Luxeuil that St. Bathilda brought its first abbot. Later on when she founded the monastery of Chelles near Paris, she obtained its first abbess from Jouarre.[3]

Along the northwestern coast of France between the Seine and the frontier of modern Belgium are the ruins of half a dozen monasteries, all of which date back to the early seventh century and were founded in the Columban tradition from Luxeuil. Jumièges and Fontenelle on the Seine were, as we have seen, endowed by St. Ouën, the celebrated Archbishop of Rouen, in whose diocese they were situated. Fontenelle later changed its name to that of its founder, St. Vandrille, who received his vocation to the religious life at the tomb of St. Columban's Irish comrade, St. Ursanne, and afterwards learned monasticism at Bobbio and Romainmoutier.[4] Before St. Philibert founded Jumièges, he was a monk at Rebais. He made a pilgrimage to Luxeuil, Bobbio and other Columban institutions to study their spirit and, after the establishment of Jumièges, erected there

[1]Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* II, Intro. v; *Op. Cit.* p. 779.
[2]Mabillon, *Op. Cit.* Ibid.
[3]Gougaud, *Gaelic Pioneers*, p. 15.
[4]See I, Chapter XXV, p. 102.

an altar to St. Columban. Both monasteries followed the Rule of Luxeuil, as did also Noirmoutier and Montivilliers, founded by St. Philibert.[1]

We know from the chronicle of the monastery of St. Riquier that the Somme valley came under the influence of St. Columban and his companions soon after he landed in France.[2] To Richarius, a convert of those days, the renowned abbey named after him owed its origin. Relics of St. Columban and of his companions, Caidoc and Fricor, who converted St. Riquier, were preserved there as late as the middle of the seventeenth century.[3] Not far from St. Riquier, but on the southern bank of the Somme and nearer to the sea, another monastery had already been erected at a place called Leuconaüs. Its founder, St. Valery, was a monk at Luxeuil with Columban and a favorite with the saint. After Columban left Luxeuil, Valery sought permission from Eustace to become a missionary and preach the Gospel to the people near the mouth of the Somme, where some remnants of paganism and superstition still lingered. The monastery which he founded at Leuconaüs became known as St. Valery in later years[4].

Still farther north, where France and Belgium now meet, the influence from Luxeuil was felt through the centuries almost to our own time. To the historians of the penal days in Ireland and England the name of the great seminary of St. Omer brings many a vision of heroism, for it was one of those historic European schools to which the Catholic youth from these countries went to prepare for the priesthood and not unfrequently for martyrdom. It was there, too, that Bishop

[1]See I, Chapter XXVI, p. 106.
[2]*Chronicon Centulense,* Hariulf, I. c. VI.
[3]*Op. Cit.* II, p. 65.
[4]*Vita Walarici,* c. II, *M. G. H.* IV. p. 164.

Carroll, first bishop of the United States, received his education. St. Omer owes its name and origin to Audomar or Omer, a monk of Luxeuil, who came originally from the country around Lake Constance. After spending some years as a missionary in northern France, he was appointed Bishop of Therouanne and immediately sought three monks from Luxeuil to establish a monastery in his diocese. The new monastery, which was established at Sithiu near the modern town of St. Omer, was named after St. Bertin, the youngest of the three monks from Luxeuil. Of the other two, Mommelin became the first abbot of St. Bertin and afterwards bishop of Noyon[1], while Ebertran became abbot of St. Quentin.

There still remains one other group of Columban institutions to mention, namely, those that sprang up in the vicinity of the Loire and in Aquitaine. The most famous and permanent of these was Fleury, the modern St. Benoît-sur-Loire, founded by Leodebald, abbot of St. Aignan in Orleans. During the ravages of the Lombards in Italy towards the end of the seventh century, the body of St. Benedict is said to have been transferred to Fleury from Monte Cassino. We have the testimony of St. Leodebald himself that at Fleury both the Columban and Benedictine Rules existed side by side[2].

South of the Loire at Bourges, according to Jonas, a noblewoman named Berthoara founded a monastery for nuns. In the same neighborhood also Babolen, another saint of Luxeuil, founded three monasteries, one at Gaudiacum now Jouet-sur-l'Aubois, another in an island of the Marmande, and a monastery for nuns at Charenton where the Marmande flows into the River Cher. He also founded a convent for nuns at Nevers[3].

[1]See I, Chapter XXX, p. 127.
[2]Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, II, p. 353.
[3]Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, II. 10.

All of these monasteries were established, according to Jonas, out of devotion to St. Columban and under his Rule. St. Babolen afterwards became the first abbot of St. Maur-des-Fossés near Paris.

One of the staunchest supporters of the Columban Rule among the bishops of France, who had not been themselves pupils of Luxeuil, was St. Eligius, bishop of Noyon. He founded several monasteries, we are told by Jonas, who, however, mentions only two of them, namely, Solignac and a monastery for nuns at Paris. Eligius was a layman when he founded Solignac. After having traveled through many monasteries, and finding that nowhere was the monastic rule observed as well as at Luxeuil, he placed Solignac under direct subordination to the monastery of the Vosges.[1]

From Solignac there sprang another group of monasteries not far from the Rhine, which though not strictly Columban yet undoubtedly embodied the spirit of his Rule. The first of these was Cougnon in the diocese of Trier, founded by Remaculus, a monk of Solignac, Remaculus afterwards became bishop of Maastricht and founded in his diocese the abbey of Stablo or Stavelot, as well as the monastery of Malmedy in what is now the diocese of Cologne.[2]

We must mention another monastery here that insisted on the observance of the Rule of St. Columban, although it does not belong to any of the above groups. Near Laudun in Cisalpine Gaul, St. Amandus founded the monastery of Barisiacum on property granted by him for that purpose to Abbot Andrew. In the charter there appears an attempt to insert the name of St. Columban before that of St. Benedict in referring to the rule to be

[1]See I, Chapter XXXII, p. 135; Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, II. 10.

[2]Belleshiem, *Geschicte der Katholichen Kirchen in Irland*, Vol. I, p. 150.

followed. This was about the year A. D. 664 when the Benedictine Rule had already gained supremacy.[1]

* * * * *

The later story of these monasteries is one of the brightest chapters in the annals of the Church, and comprises much of the history of the revival of European culture. It is no exaggeration to say that the best learning of the ancients has been preserved to us through these monasteries and their libraries. Within their walls medieval civilization made its first efforts in philosophy, arts, literature and science, and their priceless manuscripts are the sources from which we learn the history of the religious, political and social conditions of those by-gone days.

Many of these monasteries still stood at the eve of the French Revolution, when they were suppressed and their property confiscated. Some of them have given their names to the towns that sprang up around them in the days of their glory, like St. Omer, St. Riquier and St. Vandrille. Others, with little left of even the ruins of their material edifices, are merely place names reverently enshrining the traditions of the people. Yet all of them retain their places on the map of Europe, enduring monuments to the greatness of Columban and the services rendered to the world by his monastic spirit.[2]

[1]Migne, *Latin Patrology*, Vol. 87, Col. 1271.

[2]Andrees' Atlas and Lablache have been used to locate the site of the Columban monasteries. See map, "Europe in the Time of St. Columban."—Appendix.

## MONASTERIES WHICH OBSERVED THE RULE OF ST. COLUMBAN (A. D. 575-675)

| *Monastery* | *Founder* | *Approx. Date of Foundn.* |
|---|---|---|
| Annegray | St. Columban | 575-590 |
| Luxeuil | St. Columban | 589-590 |
| Fontaines | St. Columban | 592-593 |
| Bregenz | St. Columban | 611-612 |
| Bobbio | St. Columban | 613-614 |
| St. Gall | St. Gall, companion of St. Columban | 612-617 |
| Disentis | St. Sigisbert, companion of St. Columban | 612-613 |
| St. Ursanne | St. Ursicinus, companion of St. Columban | 610-613 |
| Lure | St. Dichuil, companion of St. Columban | 610-613 |
| Cusance | St. Ermenfried, monk of Luxeuil | 629-640 |
| Romainmoutier | Ramelin, brother of St. Donatus | 640-650 |
| Moutier-Grandval | St. Germain, monk of Luxeuil | 629-640 |
| Besançon | St. Donatus, monk of Luxeuil | 626-640 |
| *Jussamoutier | St. Donatus, monk of Luxeuil | 626-640 |
| Bèze | Waldelin, cousin of St. Donatus | 630-631 |
| *Bregille | Adalsind, sister of Waldelin | 630-640 |
| Remiremont | SS. Amatus and Romaric, monks of Luxeuil | 620-625 |
| Rebais | St. Ouën, Archbishop of Rouen | 638-639 |
| Jouarre | Adon, brother of St. Ouën | 630-631 |
| Reuil | Radon, brother of St. Ouën | 630-638 |
| *Faremoutier | Burgundofara, daughter of Chagneric, friend of St. Columban | 625-627 |
| Moutier-la-Celle | Frobert, monk of Luxeuil | 643-650 |
| Altivillers | SS. Nivardus, Archbishop of Rheims, and Bercharius, monk of Luxeuil | 650-665 |
| Montier-en-Der | St. Bercharius, monk of Luxeuil | 650-665 |
| Sens | Emmon, Archbishop of Sens | 658-660 |
| Soissons | Drausinus, Bishop of Soissons | 657-660 |
| Corbie | St. Bathilda, Queen of France | 656-660 |
| *Chelles (Paris) | St. Bathilda, Queen of France | 656-660 |
| St. Vandrille | St. Vandrille, monk of Bobbio | 639-650 |
| Jumièges | St. Philibert, monk of Luxeuil | 655-660 |
| Noirmoutier | St. Philibert, monk of Luxeuil | 655-660 |
| *Montivilliers | St. Philibert, monk of Luxeuil | 655-660 |
| St. Valery | St. Valery, monk of Luxeuil | 617-620 |
| St. Riquier | St. Riquier, converted by St. Columban's companions | 625-628 |
| St. Quentin | Ebertran, monk of Luxeuil | 659-660 |
| St. Bertin | St. Omer, Bishop of Therouanne | 650-655 |
| Fleury | St. Leodebald with the Columban tradition | 640-645 |

## MONASTERIES WHICH OBSERVED THE RULE OF ST. COLUMBAN (A. D. 575-675)—Continued

| *Monastery* | *Founder* | *Approx. Date of Foundn.* |
|---|---|---|
| *Bourges | Berthoara in devotion to St. Columban | 630-640 |
| Jouet | St. Babolen, monk of Luxeuil | 630-640 |
| *Charenton | St. Babolen, monk of Luxeuil | 630-640 |
| Insula Marmandae | St. Babolen, monk of Luxeuil | 630-640 |
| *Nevers | St. Babolen, monk of Luxeuil | 630-640 |
| Solignac | St. Eligius, Bishop of Noyon in devotion to St. Columban | 631-641 |
| Barisiacum | St. Amandus | 664-665 |
| Stablo | St. Remaculus monks of Solignac | 650-660 |
| Cougnon | St. Remaculus | 645-650 |
| Malmedy | St. Remaculus | 650-660 |

*Monasteries for nuns.

## EPISCOPAL SEES OCCUPIED BY BISHOPS WHO CAME UNDER ST. COLUMBAN'S INFLUENCE

| *Diocese* | *Bishop* | *Approx. Date of Episc'y.* |
|---|---|---|
| Rouen | St. Ouën, son of Autharius, personal friend of St. Columban | 641-684 |
| Therouanne | St. Omer, monk of Luxeuil | 637-670 |
| Vermandois | Acharius, monk of Luxeuil | 625-640 |
| Noyon | St. Eligius, patron of the Columban institutes | 641-659 |
| | St. Mommelin, monk of Luxeuil | 659-685 |
| Laon | St. Chagnoald, monk of Luxeuil | 623-634 |
| Meaux | St. Faron, personal friend of St. Columban | 626-672 |
| Verdun | Hermenfried, monk of Luxeuil | 620-630 |
| Metz | St. Arnulf, friend of St. Romaric founder of Remiremont | 611-626 |
| Besançon | St. Donatus, monk of Luxeuil | 626-656 |
| Bâle | Ragnacarius, monk of Luxeuil | 620-640 |
| Constance | John, disciple of St. Gall | 617-642 |
| Maastricht | St. Amandus | 647-650 |
| | St. Remaculus | 650-660 |

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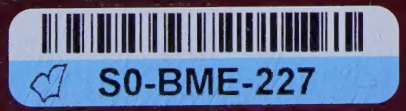
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